

HOMELAND IN THE HEART, EYES ON THE WORLD:
DOMESTIC INTERNATIONALISM, POPULAR MOBILIZATION, AND THE MAKING OF
CHINA'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION, 1962-68

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines domestic Chinese propaganda depicting global events and celebrating internationalist themes in the 1960s, tracing the effect of these materials on informing and shaping the early Cultural Revolution. Despite extensive scholarly treatment, explanations for how and why the Cultural Revolution emerged and developed as it did continue to vex, and considerations of its intricate global dimensions have been largely ignored. Moreover, the highly influential 1962-66 period preceding the movement has almost entirely been forgotten in histories of modern China.

In the wake of the Great Leap Forward, the Chinese revolution was in crisis. At home, the Great Leap's catastrophic failure and subsequent famine had discredited the pursuit of socialist modernity. Internationally, the Sino-Soviet split had alienated China from the socialist camp and threatened to isolate it globally. With their political legitimacy threatened, the Chinese Communist Party set out to win back popular hearts and minds at home. As part of this effort, Party leaders strategically deployed propaganda narratives about the wider world to help mobilize for a series of campaigns designed to reestablish popular political participation. Drawing upon a variety of mediums, depictions of events including the Vietnam War, the Congolese Civil War, the U.S Civil Rights Movement, and others would be fitted into forms such as mass rallies, documentary films, photo exhibitions, songs and musicals, and dramatic

plays. This propaganda would frame these events within the context of a number of themes designed to resonate with their target Chinese audience, among them Third World revolution, race, decolonization, postcolonial development and modernization.

These materials spoke to a latent popular nationalism, promising China's return to a place of global centrality and helping Chinese audiences imagine themselves leading a broad, transnational community of world revolutionaries. By 1966, these ideas helped inform popular perceptions of the Cultural Revolution as a world historic undertaking with ramifications for the fate of all global revolutionaries. These notions would dramatically raise the stakes of its success, help blur the line between foreign and domestic 'enemies' and pave the way for accusations of treason to usher in a wave of nationalist xenophobia and corresponding violence.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Christopher Tang is a Ph.D. Candidate in Modern Chinese History at Cornell University. He holds a B.A. in History and English from McGill University (2007), an M.A. in History from McGill University (2010), and an M.A. in History from Cornell University (2013).

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Introduction

In August 2013, Chen Xiaolu did something highly unusual for a former Red Guard. He apologized. The son of Chen Yi, the one-time leading member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and former Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the younger Chen wanted to atone for his actions in violently carrying out the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76) some fifty years earlier. As a Red Guard – those young, zealous revolutionaries mobilized by Party Chairman Mao Zedong to extinguish bourgeois elements seeking to infiltrate China's socialist revolution – Chen Xiaolu had answered Mao's call to the letter.

In the summer of 1966, Chen had abusively criticized his high school teachers, ordering them to wear dunce caps as punishment for stunting the vigor of the revolution. Though Chen's apology conveniently sidestepped any personal role in the unmerciful beating his counterrevolutionary instructors suffered next, he admitted that he did nothing to stop the assault. He must ultimately, he declared, "bear direct responsibility" for being insufficiently "brave enough to stop the inhumane prosecutions."¹ Indeed, owing to the ferocity of the beatings and scathing accusations Chen helped to organize, the school's senior party official committed suicide, forging a makeshift noose and fashioning it to a windowsill to escape her persecution.

Chen Xiaolu's confession, however muted, is part of a mild yet conspicuous wave in recent years of public apologies by former Red Guards to the victims of their actions.² As the PRC has been reluctantly working its way toward this the 50th anniversary year of the commencement of the Cultural Revolution, these apologies bespeak a detectable (however

¹ Jane Perlez, "A Leader in Mao's Cultural Revolution Faces His Past," *The New York Times*, December 6, 2013, A5.

² See also Anthony Kuhn, "Chinese Red Guards Apologize, Reopening a Dark Chapter," *NPR*, February 4, 2014; Yu Hua, "China Waits for an Apology," *The New York Times*, April 9, 2014; Xiao Han, "Confessions of the Cultural Revolution," *The New York Times*, January 26, 2014; Jane Perlez, "Decades After the Cultural Revolution, a Rare Letter of Remorse," *The New York Times*, December 6, 2013; J.M., "Time to Say Sorry," *The Economist*, August 29, 2013.

slight) yearning for reckoning; closure to what remains a silenced topic in China today. As Chen himself describes his remorse, “for the purification of the soul, the progress of society and the future of the nation, one must make this kind of apology.”³ Purification of the *individual* soul is one thing, however, and explaining the larger phenomenon of the Cultural Revolution remains something quite distinct. Today, the period exists as an inappropriate object of analysis by the CCP’s standards, and an unsavory conversation topic within popular Chinese circles as well.

For those asking such questions, however, individual acts of repentance for discrete episodes of the period’s tumult expectedly fall well short of explaining how and why these events could have occurred in the first place. Fifty years later – and four decades since the end of the Mao era (1949-76) – these questions persist. Indeed, despite the recent blossoming of a lively community of historians of the PRC piecing together the Mao years, it remains difficult for scholars to account for the widespread popular enthusiasm with which many Chinese people greeted Mao’s unleashing of the Cultural Revolution midway through 1966. That the movement came mere years after the country had emerged from the catastrophic Great Leap Forward (1958-61) and its corresponding famine only further confounds interpretation. When it comes to explaining the Cultural Revolution, important questions linger.

Reconstructing the “Forgotten Years”

The enduring perplexity of the Cultural Revolution, however, persists not for lack of effort or inquiry. In recent years, and alongside the extensive development of PRC history as a subfield unto itself, scholars have continued to seek answers to the so-called turbulent decade between 1966-76. While Cultural Revolution history now boasts a handful of authoritative general narratives laying out its basic dynamics and major flashpoints, specialized local studies

³ Perlez, “A Leader in Mao’s Cultural Revolution Faces His Past,” *The New York Times*.

work to complement these texts by examining how the Cultural Revolution actually played out on the ground.⁴ The combination of these works allows us to capture the period from two different levels, first from the state-centered purview of Mao's coterie and the major episodes reaching their attention, and second from the people-centered perspective of how individuals carried out and practiced the movement in their own everyday existence. Invaluable both, these orientations often tend to exist in isolation from one another, the interactive state-society dynamic between them relatively unexplored.

Other studies of the subfield make a concerted gesture toward this realm by zeroing in on why, in its early forms, the Cultural Revolution descended into violence. Positing contingent variables from the crosscutting socio-economic backgrounds of various Red Guard factions to fluctuations in the weather which facilitated armed confrontation, these works offer meticulously crafted glimpses of how and why local actors took up Mao's call to action.⁵ A number of recent works, similarly inspired to determine what drove zealous practitioners into exuberant violence, focus less on individual cases and more on mobilizing ideas pervasive and cherished throughout

⁴ For general narrative overviews of the Cultural Revolution see, Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Ten Years of Turbulence: The Chinese Cultural Revolution*, (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1993), Wang Nianyi, *Da dongluan de niandai [Years of Great Turbulence]*, (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe [Henan People's Press], 1988). For more specialized, local accounts of how the Cultural Revolution unfolded see Wang Shaoguang, *Failure of Charisma: The Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), Stanley Rosen, *Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou (Canton)*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), Andrew Walder and Dong Guoqiang, "Nanjing's Failed 'January Revolution' of 1967: The Inner Politics of a Provincial Power Seizure" *The China Quarterly*, 203 (September 2010): 675-692, and "Local Politics in the Chinese Cultural Revolution: Nanjing under Military Command" *Journal of Asian Studies*, 70:2 (May 2011): 425-447, Denise Y. Ho, "Revolutionizing Antiquity: The Shanghai Cultural Bureaucracy in the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1968," *The China Quarterly*, 207 (September 2011): 687-705, Elizabeth J. Perry and Li Xun, *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997). See too the essays collected in the volume, Joseph W. Escherick, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), all of which treat local episodes of the period from all across the PRC.

⁵ See, for example, Andrew G. Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), Jing Lin, *The Red Guards' Path to Violence: Political, Educational, and Psychological Factors*, (New York: Praeger, 1991), Yang Su, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

these years.⁶ Though these studies inspire the inquiry offered in this dissertation, ideas of the wider world and their influence on domestic Chinese events are largely absent.

Scholarly explanations for the Cultural Revolution are also hindered by scant coverage of the “forgotten years” preceding it. Indeed, as one historian of the period recently remarked, more investigation is required into the early-to-mid-1960s to help pinpoint the “genesis” of this deeply influential event.⁷ Wedged between the end of the Great Leap Forward and the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, the impactful years from 1962-1966 remain remarkably underexplored despite a mounting availability of source materials from this period. To date, most existing treatments of these years follow top-level political developments and the deepening cracks within the CCP leadership.⁸ Further still, these “forgotten years” remain largely undertreated even as PRC history itself begins to flourish.⁹

Reconstructing the “forgotten years” of the early-to-mid-1960s would not only capture how PRC politics worked to shape everyday life on the ground in China, but also help erode the

⁶ See, for example, Daniel Lesse, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Mobo Gao, *The Battle for China's Past: Mao and the Cultural Revolution*, (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2008), Yiching Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁷ Wu Yiching made this assertion in his spoken remarks at the “Reassessing China's Cultural Revolution: 50 Years Later” panel convened at the 130th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Atlanta, GA, January 10, 2016. Though this particular comment does not appear here, an abridged transcript of the panel is available at: Alexander C. Cook, “The Cultural Revolution at 50: A Q&A with Four Specialists,” *The Los Angeles Review of Books: The China Blog*, [available online].

⁸ See, for example, Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China: Rectification and the Decline of Party Norms, 1950-1965*, second edition, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993); Richard Baum, *Prelude to Revolution: Mao, the Party, and the Peasant Question, 1962-66*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes, *Ssu-Ch'ing: The Socialist Education Movement, 1962-1966*, (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, 1968), Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vols. 1-3, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974-1997), Li Mingjiang, *Mao's China and the Sino-Soviet Split: Ideological Dilemma*, (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁹ Exceptions to this include recent studies by Jeremy Brown, Zachary Scarlett, and several essays in the recent volume, Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson eds., *Maoism at the Grassroots: Everyday Life in China's Era of High Socialism*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015). See Jeremy Brown, *City versus Countryside in Mao's China: Negotiating the Divide*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), and Zachary A. Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split: Maoist Politics, Global Narratives, and the Imagination of the World,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Northeastern University, 2013).

reification of 1966 as a benchmark year.¹⁰ While the importance of 1966 need not be diminished, it is only by disregarding it as a dividing line that we might better examine the ideas that crossed freely over it and thus helped shape and inform its significance. As this study will demonstrate, pervasive ideas about the wider world and China's unique role to play within it did not change across 1966, and indeed played an important role in making the 1966-68 early Cultural Revolution what it was. As historians of modern China do well to challenge the once hegemonic 1949 divide separating the People's Republic from its antecedents, so too we must disrupt the notion that 1966 marks a full-scale rupture from what preceded it.

Still another impediment to understanding Mao's China in the 1960s is the false dichotomy isolating its domestic from its international dimensions. Though modern Chinese history is not alone in its inclination to interpret these spheres discretely, this problem is particularly problematic for appraising the Mao era. As this study will make clear, Chairman Mao Zedong, his peers in the CCP, and even large swaths of the PRC public viewed the Chinese revolution within the larger context of the world; when they did not, they were encouraged to. And though any political history of China's 1960s cannot avoid the domestic impact of Beijing's break with Moscow and the effect of 'Soviet revisionism' on inspiring the Cultural Revolution, the wider world's seepage into everyday Chinese life tends to end here.

To date, those most actively challenging the false international-domestic dichotomy are historians of the PRC's foreign relations. Viewing the international behavior of Mao's China in the global Cold War as either deeply inspired by, or fundamentally linked to, the domestic unfolding of the Chinese revolution, these scholars help us to recognize the inseparability of

¹⁰ As Brown and Johnson remark, for example, a close look the PRC's grassroots in the 1960s, reveals that 1965 was "just as significant" as the official 1966 "starting point" of the Cultural Revolution (Brown and Johnson, "Introduction," in Brown and Johnson eds., *Maoism at the Grassroots*, 6).

these spheres.¹¹ This critical intervention notwithstanding, owing to their explicit and predominant focus on explaining the *international* behavior of the PRC, these studies rarely dedicate much space to the domestic implications of China's ideas about the world. As one component to this, scholars like Chen Jian and Thomas Christensen have alerted us to Mao's instrumentalization of international events for the purposes of domestic political mobilization. Since the focus of their respective works is not, however, on reconstructing the social history of Mao's China, neither reveals much about how these processes of mobilization functioned or what they looked like. This study aims to offer precisely this, describing in detail how the world was brought to bear on China's 1960s.

In 1962, the Chinese revolution was in crisis. The Great Leap Forward had backfired, tens of millions had starved to death, and neither the Party nor the revolution it served was spared its fallout. Mao Zedong himself was personally diminished, forced to the sidelines of the CCP leadership while the recovery efforts were rolled out. The Sino-Soviet split, now common knowledge to China's friends and enemies alike, had isolated the PRC from the socialist bloc and

¹¹ See, for example, Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and *Mao's China and the Cold War*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Shen Zhihua and Xia Yafeng, *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership, 1945-1959: A New History*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), Shen Zhihua, *Mao, Stalin, and the Korean War: Trilateral Communist Relations in the 1950s*, translated by Neil Silver, (New York: Routledge, 2012), and Shen Zhihua and Li Danhui, *After Learning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), Yang Kuisong, "Reconsidering the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries," *The China Quarterly* 193 (2008): 102-121, Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and especially *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*, (New York: Basic Books, 2012), Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and *Worse Than a Monolith: Alliance Politics and Problems of Coercive Diplomacy in Asia*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), John W. Garver, *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

meant it now had icy relations with *both* of the world's two superpowers. That October's Sino-Indian border war – the second in three years – threatened the image of itself China had sought to sow within the burgeoning Third World community, a group growing steadily amidst the second wave of decolonization. At home and abroad, the tide seemed to be turning against the PRC. For the CCP's domestic constituency, the Chinese revolution was quite simply failing the test of everyday lived experience; renegeing on its promise of a socialist modernity.

For Party leaders, the situation was bad, the optics no better. It would need to win back Chinese hearts and minds made weary by hardship and loss. It would need to regain its own legitimacy in their eyes. A series of political campaigns would be called into action, attempting to draw PRC citizens back into active participation in the Chinese revolutionary enterprise and restore their shaken faith in the CCP as its steward. Throughout the 1962-66 period, the Four Clean-ups (1962-66), the Five Antis (1962-66), and the Socialist Education Movement (1962-66) would lead the charge of these campaigns, while a host of smaller ones would spur praise for revolutionary heroes and impel valorizing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) as the people's exemplary protector. If the Party could mobilize people to participate in these campaigns, it could pull them back into the fold of the revolution.

But mobilizing popular participation for these campaigns was not the same task in 1962 that it had been in the CCP's years at the helm over the previous decade; it would be harder now. The comprehensive domestic-international crisis circumstances facing the Party (and the country) signaled a dire situation, one requiring renewed and vigorous methods of mobilization. Here, the Party would revamp an old and trusted strategy: the domestic deployment of internationalism as a propaganda trope designed to secure popular political mobilization. As it had at various junctures in its past, the CCP would use global events and ideas about the wider

world as instruments in inspiring their domestic constituents into action. The world was turning in China's favor, their argument went, with the CCP guiding the country along its socialist path to destiny. The Chinese revolution must forge ahead, the fate of all the world's revolutionary people depended upon a strong China playing a central role.

Before this argument could be deployed, however, the conceptual groundwork needed to be laid. Throughout 1962, Mao would make his triumphant return to the Party frontlines by discursively and conceptually linking China's domestic revolution with the international realm. The two spheres were theatres of the same single class struggle, the Chairman would argue. From here, the 1962-66 period would lay witness to a stream of domestically deployed propaganda depicting global events and celebrating themes of internationalism. In so doing, these tales of events in Vietnam, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Panama and even the American South, appeared framed within the context of themes like Third World revolution, decolonization, race, postcolonial development, and modernization. This propaganda was deployed across an extensive array of forms, among them comic books, dramatic plays, mass rallies, photo exhibitions, films, and songs. The world was being brought to local China, and was given every opportunity to seep into everyday life.

By 1966, the cumulative effect of internationalist propaganda deployed over the preceding years was poised to bear fruit. As Mao prepared to launch the Cultural Revolution designed to save China's revolution from sliding back toward capitalism, Chinese audiences raised on a steady diet of these didactic tales from around the world were primed to interpret the Cultural Revolution as at once both Chinese and global in its ramifications. By saving the fate of China's socialist revolution, so too it would be securing the future prospects of all the world's revolutionary people. Accordingly, the stakes of the movement would become raised

dramatically, and it would begin to take on life-or-death significance; the line between domestic and foreign enemies of the revolution was to become blurred beyond recognition. The Party's strategic deployment of internationalism had not only helped to secure popular mobilization for the Cultural Revolution, therefore, but it would also have a profound effect on shaping the violence that would come to define the early movement. It is only when we begin to make sense of this internationalist propaganda of China's early-to-mid-1960s – its intentions, its content, its themes, its forms, and its resonance – that we can we begin to explain how the Cultural Revolution came about, and why it descended into widespread violence as it did.

Propaganda and *Domestic Internationalism*

In seeking to explain how and why ordinary Chinese practitioners became embroiled in the Cultural Revolution as they did, I look to the ideas that inspired them. Among these set of ideas was a unique perspective of the wider world and thoughts on where exactly China fit within it. And while these ideas themselves drew upon larger, preexisting popular Chinese concerns with China's return to a place of strength, dignity, and centrality – ideas predating 1949 and even Chinese socialism – in the 1960s, these thoughts were brought to the fore by strategic Party-issued propaganda. It is thus that propaganda sits as the heart of this study's inquiry into China's road to the Cultural Revolution.

Propaganda – and Chinese Communist propaganda in particular – however, poses a handful of challenges to scholarly analysis. Indeed, in the Chinese case, the very term *xuanchuan* holds a meaning closer to 'spreading or disseminating information,' rather than the more pejorative notion commonly attached to the English word propaganda.¹² Such challenges

¹² In the Chinese word *xuanchuan*, the first character *xuan* refers to the verb 'to proclaim' or 'to announce,' while the second character *chuan* refers to 'passing on,' 'handing down,' or 'spreading.'

of translation, of cultural divides, and of common colloquial connotations notwithstanding, this study seeks less to impart a novel definition of propaganda, and instead devotes its attention to taking seriously its analytic value in helping reconstruct Mao's China by reading these narratives for their implicit hints as to what ideas resonated with the target Chinese audience at the time.

In defining propaganda and its intentions, this dissertation draws upon a more conventional scholarly treatment of the concept. Following the path-breaking work of Chinese propaganda specialist Anne-Marie Brady, I too read PRC propaganda through the lens of propaganda scholars including Harold Lasswell and scholar of Soviet propaganda Peter Kenez.¹³ In Kenez's definition, propaganda is "the attempt to transmit social and political values in the hope of affecting people's thinking, emotions, and thereby behavior."¹⁴ As Brady suggests, Kenez's interpretation accords with and "has always been an essential element of the CCP hold on power."¹⁵

While scholars of political culture are inclined to interpret their focus as distinct from the domain of propaganda, the two realms certainly collide at times in China and elsewhere. In his thorough reading of the CCP's effort to instill a new political culture in the young PRC in the early 1950s, Chang-tai Hung defines political culture as "shared values, collective visions, common attitudes, and public expectations created by high politics" and aiming to shape everyday life through "symbols, rituals, rhetoric, and visual images."¹⁶ For Hung, early PRC propaganda was deployed as part of crafting this early political culture with the goal of setting

¹³ See Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 1-8. See also Harold Lasswell, "Propaganda" in Robert Jackall ed., *Propaganda*, (New York: New York University Press, 1995), and Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 3.

¹⁶ Chang-tai Hung, *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 5.

the political tone of the PRC under CCP rule. Though Hung's analysis greatly inspires this study's reading of propaganda in the 1960s, I am inclined to read the production of propaganda as itself contingent and negotiated between state and society in much the same way Hung reads political culture.

Here, my reading of internationalist propaganda is also informed by Elizabeth Perry's recent work on the enduring and evolving legacy of the Anyuan coal mine trope in the CCP's "revolutionary tradition."¹⁷ As the CCP aimed to consolidate its power in the PRC, its shifting portrayal of the labor movement at Anyuan betrays its shrewd effort to achieve "cultural positioning," whereby its deployment and depiction of the trope would accommodate and embrace the prevailing ideas amongst the target audience. At the center of Perry's analysis, therefore, is a commitment to taking seriously both how the Party tailored its message to resonate with Chinese audiences, as well as how it cataloged and incorporated what ideas were important to those ordinary Chinese actors themselves. Both of these concerns are present throughout this study, as I trace the trope of internationalism in CCP propaganda throughout the 1960s, examining Party depictions of the wider world, their resonance with popular Chinese ideas about that world, and the hinge of nationalism bridging CCP propagandists and their target audience.

The work of Brady, Hung, Perry and others on propaganda notwithstanding, analysis of CCP propaganda from the Mao era remains somewhat limited. Hung himself laments how historians "have traditionally underestimated the significance of propaganda, paying scant attention to both the ideas and instruments of political persuasion."¹⁸ There lingers, it would seem, a reluctance to engage explicitly with propaganda as an object of analysis; a hesitancy that itself might flow from China's contemporary transition into post-socialism, or perhaps owing to

¹⁷ Elizabeth J. Perry, *Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1.

¹⁸ Hung, *Mao's New World*, 18.

a Cold War triumphalism which creeps into the field and colors the questions we ask.¹⁹

Whatever the reason, as literary scholar Wang Ban describes in addressing art and literature of the era,

The simplest retort to this view is that literature and art created on the Yan'an principle [of serving politics above all] nourished and fashioned a whole generation, or several generations of readers, who may think very differently from the detached critic. These readers did not see this brand of literature as propaganda when they first read it, and many of them were inspired by this literature to become enthusiastic participants in revolutionary movements. Even if we concede that Communist literature is propaganda, we still have to consider seriously why it worked – often effectively.²⁰

Indeed, although works grappling explicitly with Mao era propaganda remain few, scholars continue to piece together the culture of this period, and of the Cultural Revolution specifically.²¹ More recently, PRC social and cultural historians have read political propaganda and cultural production alongside archival documents, gaining important insights into the practice of politics and culture under Mao.²² With the exception of the work of Zachary Scarlett, however,

¹⁹ Three very notable exceptions to this aversion to treating explicitly Mao era propaganda are Tim Cheek, Anne-Marie Brady, and Cagnas Ungor. See, for example, Tim Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the Intelligentsia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship and Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), and Cagnas Ungor, "Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)," (Ph.D. Dissertation, SUNY Binghamton, 2009). See too several noteworthy propaganda poster and essay collections, including Stefan Landsberger, *Chinese Propaganda Posters: From Revolution to Modernization*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), Lincoln Cushing and Ann Tompkins, *Chinese Posters: Art from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007), Melissa Chiu and Zheng Shengtian, *Art and China's Revolution*, (New York: Asia Society, 2008).

²⁰ Wang Ban, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth-Century China*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 209-210.

²¹ See, for example, Paul Clark, *Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics since 1949*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Bonnie S. McDougall ed., *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1979*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Krista van Fleit Hang, *Literature the People Love: Reading Chinese Texts from the Early Maoist Period (1949-1966)*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013). On the culture of the Cultural Revolution more specifically, see Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), Richard King ed., *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010). For an insightful analysis of the political architecture of Beijing ushered in by the CCP in the early PRC, see Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

²² See, for example, Brian James DeMare, *Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Aminda M. Smith, *Thought Reform and China's Dangerous Classes: Reeducation, Resistance, and the People*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013),

internationally minded domestic propaganda in the Mao years has almost entirely eluded sustained treatment to this point.²³

At the same time, a stream of recent works has pushed the field to consider transnational influences working their way into China and the PRC, but also emanating out from it as well.²⁴ Alongside the work of non-China specialists, these studies help to pinpoint the ways in which ideas about the wider world – including race and the postcolonial navigation of the Cold War landscape – were passed between countries and peoples alike during this period.²⁵ Indeed, the anthropologist Heonik Kwon’s emphasis on elevating narratives of the “other Cold War” – the one lived and experienced by ordinary people themselves – guides this dissertation’s look into how ideas about the global landscape of the Cold War, decolonization, and the emerging Third

Matthew D. Johnson, “International and Wartime Origins of the Propaganda State: The Motion Picture in China, 1897-1955,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2008).

²³ See Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split.”

²⁴ See, for example, Alexander C. Cook ed., *Mao’s Little Red Book: A Global History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), Emily E. Wilcox, “The Postcolonial Blind Spot: Chinese Dance in the Era of Third Worldism, 1949-1965,” *positions: asia critique*, (forthcoming), Julia Lovell, “The Uses of Foreigners in Mao-era China: Techniques of Hospitality and International Image-Building in the People’s Republic, 1949-1976,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 25 (2015): 135-158, Matthew D. Johnson, “From Peace to the Panthers: PRC Engagement with African-American Transnational Networks, 1949-1979,” *Past and Present*, 218 (Supplement 8) (2013): 233-257, Robeson Taj Frazer, *The East is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), Amanda G. Shuman, “The Politics of Socialist Athletics in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1966,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2014), Alexander C. Cook, “Third World Maoism,” in Timothy Cheek ed., *Mao: A Critical Introduction*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 288-312, Cheng Yinghong, “Xiang shijie shuchu geming – ‘wenge’ zai Ya-Fei-La de yingxiang chutan [Exporting Revolution to the World: Initial Research into the Influence of the Cultural Revolution in Asia, Africa, Latin America]” *Dangdai Zhongguo yanjiu [Contemporary Chinese Studies]*, 3 (2006), Bill Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), Fred Ho, “The Inspiration of Mao and the Chinese Revolution on the Black Liberation Movement and the Asian Movement on the East Coast,” in Fred Ho and Bill Mullen, *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008): 155-164, Robin D. G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, “Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution,” in *Ibid.*, 97-154, Vijay Prashad, *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che*, (New York: Verso, 2002).

²⁵ For important non-China-centered works on Cold War cultural diplomacy and its domestic political implications, see Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), and Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-61*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

World were packaged to inspire political participation at home.²⁶ Targeting such ideas across the so-called ‘global 1960s’ specifically, yet another emerging community of scholarship is piecing together the dynamic interaction between the decade’s motley leftist community, situating too the unique role of Mao’s China (sometimes the mere *idea* of Mao’s China) within this group.²⁷

What remains unexplored thus far, however, are the domestic *Chinese* implications of the PRC’s transnationalism amidst these ‘global 1960s.’ Put another way, if French intellectuals or Congolese guerillas were said to be inspired by Mao’s thoughts or the PRC’s postcolonial story, what did this mean for ordinary Chinese people at home in the PRC? This dissertation contends that ideas about the wider world and China’s role within it, meant a great deal to Chinese citizens throughout these years. Learning about such events through a strategic and multi-faceted wave of CCP propaganda over these years, the PRC’s allegedly central position within a world turning in the favor of all revolutionary peoples would have a profound impact on inspiring popular political mobilization in the years leading up to the Cultural Revolution. In telling a story that is at once political, diplomatic, social, and cultural history, this study uncovers how the world was brought to bear on everyday, local China in the 1960s.

²⁶ See Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). See too Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), Mary L. Dudziak, *Wartime: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

²⁷ See, for example, Christopher Lee ed., *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), Zachary A. Scarlett and Samantha Christiansen, eds., *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), Karen Dubinsky, ed., *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

The CCP's approach was to domestically deploy propaganda celebrating events from around the world and themes of internationalism - a strategy I call *domestic internationalism*. Though *domestic internationalism* was not new to the Party in the 1960s, circumstances of crisis and opportunity would see it revamped and intensified over this decade. Freed, by 1962, from the fraternal confines of its junior membership in the Sino-Soviet alliance, the CCP was poised to revive and make prominent ideas about the world it had previously subdued in favor of socialist solidarity. By discursively and conceptually linking China's domestic revolution with events occurring around the world, this revamped *domestic internationalism* brought to the fore long-cherished notions about Third World revolution, decolonization, race, postcolonial development, and modernization. Seating these themes in enthralling tales of ongoing struggle in far-flung, exotic places across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, this internationalist propaganda was designed to stir Chinese audiences into political participation at home by sparking with them an idea – an idea of a vast, world revolutionary community all surging forward together; an idea about time and history finally being on their side; an idea about China serving its rightful role at the forefront of this group.

Indeed, *domestic internationalism* made clear, the PRC was uniquely positioned to greet history as the leader of the world's revolutionary peoples. Itself a non-white victim of colonial exploitation, the Chinese people – led by the wartime efforts of the CCP – had, since the founding of the PRC, built up a strong, sovereign and modernizing country to call their own. They were an inspiration to all those clamoring for independence, dignity, and modernity across the colonial and postcolonial Third World. Accordingly, *domestic internationalism* was sure to insinuate, it was incumbent on the Chinese people to not only continue to dedicate themselves to

China's revolutionary path toward a socialist modernity; they should commit themselves to it *even more* given its dual domestic and global importance.

Here, *domestic internationalism* provoked two layers of imagination. First, it encouraged Chinese audiences to imagine the existence of (and their role within) a vast, worldwide community of revolutionaries and progressive people all moving forward together. They shared a sense of purpose and unity in pursuit of their due ideals of justice, equality, sovereignty, dignity, and their own right to advance toward modernity. This community constituted the overwhelming majority of the world's people and their march forward was thus on the right side of history, as it always had been. Second, then, *domestic internationalism* pushed audiences to imagine a sense of simultaneity and shared time existing between the people and events engulfing this community. Their moment had finally come; the world was turning in their direction. The collective decline of U.S. imperialism, Soviet revisionism, and all lackeys siding with these exploitative superpowers was not only inevitable, it was already happening. Across Burma, Bengal, Berkeley or Beijing, events occurring within this community carried a ripple effect; the local was tied to the global, in real time no less.

Accompanying nearly all the forms of *domestic internationalism* investigated in this dissertation – mass rallies, documentary films, photo exhibitions, music, dramatic plays – so-called 'foreign friends' visiting the PRC played a supporting role, explicitly and implicitly (through their mere presence) working to consolidate this imagined global community and its imagined synchronicity. From guerilla fighters to dance troupes to skilled trainee workers, these various types of foreigners helped corroborate the Party's reading of the global landscape, attesting to the existence of a worldwide community of progressive peoples enjoying a shared sense of time and destiny.

As the emerging trend of transnational history highlights the flow of ideas across reified and arbitrary national boundaries, *domestic internationalism* reveals the power the very *idea* of the transnational carried in China's 1960s. Regardless of whether or not anti-American protesters in Panama, Congolese guerrillas, or Vietnamese soldiers *actually* drew inspiration from Mao Zedong or China's revolutionary achievements, they were said to have. It was this very idea of the PRC's transnationality – however imagined or real it might be – that carried currency with Chinese audiences. As *domestic internationalism* unfurled this notion through an arsenal of enthralling mediums, China's developmental trajectory from semi-colony to self-described postcolonial success story came to be understood as a blueprint for all the world's people. Forging ahead with the Chinese revolution, therefore, became coterminous with supporting the liberation of all oppressed peoples around the world.

This conception of *domestic internationalism*, and its emphasis on forging an imagined community across time and space, draws principally from the work of Benedict Anderson. Though Anderson's central focus is how disparate individuals came to occupy a shared conception of themselves as a singular nation, I trace this process across a transnational space to seek out how Chinese audiences were encouraged to self-identify as also part of a larger imagined community. At the same time, as this dissertation demonstrates, the Chinese nation itself and tangible feelings of community offered through crowds and shared physical spaces played an essential role in allowing oneself to feel first part of a nationally-defined community, and thereafter part of that Chinese group's contingent within a wider, transnational community. These individuals were Chinese *and* they were world revolutionaries. Here, Anderson's

observations on print capitalism and the newspaper's use of "empty, homogenous time" to suggest a simultaneity of events across space are particularly poignant.²⁸

Beyond Anderson, the concept of *domestic internationalism* also derives inspiration from historical analyses likewise privileging the domestic impact of perceptions of the wider world. In his parallel look at how Vietnamese imaginations of America encouraged anti-colonial efforts there, and how flawed American imaginings of Vietnam informed its postwar entanglements in Southeast Asia, Mark Philip Bradley gives credence to the impactful role played by political imagining in the highly globalized twentieth century.²⁹ Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, though interested mainly with U.S. policymakers' manipulation of the international Cold War landscape for domestic political gain, also seek to blur the line between the "international-domestic," tabling instead the "intermestic" dimension of policy, whereby the two realms are "dynamically intertwined."³⁰

This study builds off these contributions to examine not only how Chinese Communist Party leaders instrumentalized the globe to serve the PRC's own socialist revolution, but also how Chinese audiences engaged with these ideas in their everyday lives. Though only select circles of Chinese people were likely able to locate the Congo on a map of the world before 1965, in short order they would come to care deeply about events ongoing there. They would carry this passion into their own everyday lives and political activity, offering additional importance to their practice of the Chinese revolution. By the eve of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the

²⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition, (New York: Verso, 2006), 24.

²⁹ See Mark Philip Bradley, *Imagining Vietnam & America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

³⁰ Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 10.

cumulative effect of *domestic internationalism* made answering Mao's call to action imperative, even global in scope.

But why did *domestic internationalism* work? Why did ordinary Chinese people come to care about the Congo, Panama, Vietnam, and the world revolutionary community well beyond these and other places? Why did *domestic internationalism's* ideas resonate? To answer this, we must look back before China's 1960s, indeed before the PRC and Chinese socialism as well. Ironically, at the heart of Chinese internationalism in the 1960s was a pervasive and long-standing Chinese nationalism. By carving out a world turning in the favor of its progressive peoples, all of whom were said to draw inspiration from the PRC's rise as a postcolonial power, *domestic internationalism* tapped into ideas that resonated with swaths of the Chinese populace in ways socialism or the CCP alone never could; this was bigger than them.

Indeed, for all the ruptures to the preexisting order wrought by the CCP's establishment of the PRC in 1949, Chinese nationalism was alive and well in Mao's China. As Chen Jian argues, a critical component of understanding how and why ordinary Chinese people "willingly embraced Mao's revolutionary programs" was their inherent promise to revive "China's central position in the world."³¹ This "Central Kingdom mentality," in Chen's terminology, drew upon the millennia-old notion of China's existence as the very essence of civilization itself. Occupying the absolute center of the boundless realm of 'all-under-heaven' (*tianxia*), as Zheng Wang describes, this *tianxia* system of international and cross-cultural interaction placed great value on what we would now call soft power. Ideas of cultural and moral influence were privileged, with

³¹ Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 12.

China understood to be the single true civilization. What *tianxia* represented, Wang succinctly puts it, was “a Chinese universalism.”³²

But *tianxia*, and Chinese self-identifications as the center of civilization, was dealt a humbling blow in the nineteenth century. In the wake of the First Opium War (1839-42), China was forced to acknowledge the Westphalian order of nation-states held up by the west. Under the boot of semi-coloniality, the ensuing decades would see China tortured by a series of unequal treaties, forced trade, draconian indemnities, the loss of territory, and the forfeiture of judicial sovereignty through extraterritoriality. When the western powers were not having their way with China, Japan took over. Following the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), imperial Japan sparked its own decades-long foray into Qing (1644-1911) and later Republican (1912-49) China, demanding economic and territorial concessions before invading the country in earnest in 1937. While the Japanese would be expelled amidst their World War II defeat in 1945, it would not be before the Chinese people had been humiliated and victimized by Japanese atrocities, typified by the so-called Rape of Nanjing in December 1937.

When this so-called ‘hundred years of national humiliation’ (*bainian guochi*) from the First Opium War through the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949 had finally passed, China’s victimization was used to help motivate its return to its rightful place of strength, dignity, and centrality.³³ Indeed, Mao’s famous proclamation atop Tiananmen Gate in October 1949 that “the Chinese people had stood up” itself seemed to augur the Chinese nation’s march back toward its central place in the world. Though we must not discount the grip and importance of socialism to Chinese leaders and people throughout the Mao era – indeed, this was the country’s

³² Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 73.

³³ See Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 7-8.

chosen path toward a strong, modern state – it was, first and foremost, simply the means by which China would arrive back at its rightful position. As Odd Arne Westad puts it, for the CCP

Marxism as a political theory has always been a thin veneer over a modernizing developmentalism aimed at transforming China into a strong state and highly productive society.³⁴

Just as *tianxia* was founded on the notion of a Chinese universalism whereby China wielded the soft power of its high cultural and moral standing, so too China's return to a position of central importance in the world would be highlighted by the world's people all looking toward the PRC for inspiration and guidance. It is here that we begin to see why *domestic internationalism* worked. Its promises – of a world turning in favor of those once victimized, of a global community all looking to Beijing, of enemies faltering and history correcting past grievances – all resonated with a lingering Chinese nationalism. Further still, the world these narratives painted gave ordinary Chinese people in the PRC their own role to play in China's return to global centrality. This would prove critical in mobilizing large swaths of the PRC population, but particularly so for Chinese youth, raised amidst hardship and failed promises and removed from the PRC's glory years of land reform and the Korean War (1950-53). Now they could be an active part of China's rise, just as their parents had.

It was not an accident that *domestic internationalism* struck a chord with Chinese nationalism in the 1960s. Shrewd Party propagandists were, in Elizabeth Perry's formulation, 'culturally positioning' themselves, alleviating their crisis of legitimacy by appealing to a nationalism that had survived the crises of the late 1950s and early 1960s when socialism faltered. If the Party was in trouble, *domestic internationalism* – and its strategic manipulation

³⁴ Odd Arne Westad, "The Great Transformation: China in the Long 1970s," in Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 71.

of nationalism – could help; it had done so before, it would do so in China’s 1960s, and it would continue to be a useful tool well after Mao and Chinese socialism would perish.

Indeed, it was precisely because *domestic internationalism* resonated with Chinese nationalism – and not, predominantly, along the lines of political ideology – that we must carefully situate its deployment in China’s 1960s within the context of the Sino-Soviet split. For Zachary Scarlett, in his treatment of China’s internationalist propaganda through this decade, the split was paramount in motivating and initiating these “global narratives.”³⁵ By so rupturing the PRC’s foreign relations and long-standing narratives of socialist solidarity while following the Soviet road, Scarlett argues, the split made necessary a “new worldview” for China and “new taxonomies” defining the states and peoples of the world in accordance with their political allegiances. Internationalist propaganda was thus necessary for communicating to a Chinese audience where the PRC fit in amidst a world very different from the 1950s.

While there is no question Beijing’s break with Moscow had a monumental effect on CCP leaders and certainly reordered the PRC’s geopolitical map, I instead see in the themes of *domestic internationalism* in the 1960s more continuity than change. Precisely because the Party’s narrative about the world and China’s place within it in the 1960s drew upon themes designed to resonate with Chinese nationalist yearnings for a return to global centrality, I argue that the core ideas of these narratives predated the Sino-Soviet split.

Going one step further, I read *domestic internationalism*’s central arguments about postcoloniality, modernization, even race, as predating the Sino-Soviet *alliance* (much less its split), and perhaps even Chinese socialism itself. From its earliest days, the Chinese communist revolution aspired to be about something larger than merely bringing socialism to China; it was to be a roadmap to modernity for all those oppressed by colonial and imperialist exploitation;

³⁵ Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split,” 12-15.

these issues the Soviet Union – a white, European nation spared the horrors of colonialism – could never understand. Throughout the 1950s, this sense of “bridging revolution and decolonization” would be held dear by the CCP, tempered though they were for reasons of socialist solidarity.³⁶

It is here that the Sino-Soviet split matters. The end of the troubled Beijing-Moscow axis did alter dramatically the PRC’s geopolitical landscape, and make worse its already dire circumstances of crisis amidst the Great Leap famine and economic calamities. It did not, however, shake long-held Chinese ideas about justice, postcolonial modernity, and China’s unique role to play inspiring the decolonizing peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. What it did do is remove the burden of socialist solidarity and fraternal cordiality impeding a full-throated promotion of these notions before the split. The alliance with Moscow was important to China for a variety of reasons, and towing the line of the socialist bloc was the cost in return.

Though dismissing the years of Sino-Soviet alliance wholesale would be ahistorical and oversimplified, there is good reason to believe the PRC was never fully comfortable in this relationship, and particularly so as its junior member. Indeed, even before formally consummating the PRC-Soviet Union alliance in February 1950, Mao and CCP leaders felt betrayed by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin’s 1945 agreement with Chinese Nationalist Party (or Guomintang, GMD) leader Chiang Kai-shek, whereby the latter made broad territorial concessions to the Soviets in return for Moscow’s recognition of the GMD as the legal representative of China.³⁷ Even in 1950, Stalin refused to renegotiate these concessions with Mao which, alongside making him wait for weeks in Moscow just to meet with Stalin, greatly

³⁶ See Chen Jian, “Bridging Revolution and Decolonization: The “Bandung Discourse” in China’s Early Cold War Experience,” *The Chinese Historical Review*, 15 (2), (Fall 2008): 207-241.

³⁷ See Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 26-29.

irked the Chairman.³⁸ Not long after, the Korean War offered another bump in the Sino-Soviet road, with CCP leaders confounded and frustrated by Stalin's mixed messages of encouraging the PRC to enter the war on the one hand, and his reluctant willingness to tangibly support their military efforts with materiel and air cover on the other hand.³⁹

Though we should not discount the “golden years” of the relationship, when Stalin's 1953 death gave way to closer cooperation before Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 secret speech brought it to a screeching halt, these few years were the outlier rather than the norm. Mao and his CCP peers were never comfortable playing second fiddle to Moscow, and the Chairman did not hide his sentiments about this even before the high tide of Sino-Soviet acrimony. As he told the Soviet ambassador to the PRC Pavel Iudin in 1958,

You never trust the Chinese. [To you] Russians are first-class, while we Chinese are inferior people, who are stupid and careless... You think you are in a position to control us... You have never had faith in the Chinese people... [we] were considered a backward nation. You have often stated that the Europeans used to look down on the Russians. I think some Russians now are looking down on the Chinese.⁴⁰

Mao's statement betrays not simply his frustration with Soviet perceptions of its own superiority, but also his own detectable feelings of racism and cultural inferiority directed toward the Chinese people, and the CCP as its representative. As one of a handful of elements constituting Chinese ideas of modernity in the postcolonial age, race and its relationship to the role of justice in international relations remained important to Mao and the Chinese people he represented. When China chose socialism, therefore, *and* when the PRC chose the Soviet Union in 1950, it did not do so at the cost of abandoning its own preexisting ideas – ideas about modernity, about postcoloniality, about its own unique role to play in the world. By the early

³⁸ Amongst these territorial concessions was, not insignificantly, the vast land of Outer Mongolia, under Chinese control during the Qing dynasty, but in 1950 an independent (but *de facto* Soviet satellite) state.

³⁹ See *Ibid.*, 53-61.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Westad, *Restless Empire*, 336-337.

1960s, these ideas no longer needed to take a backseat to socialist solidarity, and *domestic internationalism* placed these longstanding views front and center.

Beyond why *domestic internationalism* worked in China's 1960s, *how* did it work? Internationalist propaganda was deployed domestically during these years with the goal of penetrating into everyday life. It aimed to greet ordinary people, in urban and rural areas alike, at several places around their city or town at several points throughout their day. Seeking to win their hearts and minds by way of their eyes and ears, this propaganda took on a vast array of mediums throughout the decade. While newspapers, radio broadcasts, posters and periodicals were the most common of these tools, a revamped *domestic internationalism* went far deeper. Comic books, poems, paintings, novels, board games, sports competitions, and countless other forms all became infused with tales of events from around the world. While drawing upon some of these mediums, this dissertation will focus largely on mass rallies and holiday celebrations, documentary films, photo exhibitions, songs and musicals, and other dramatic stage plays. Through these vehicles, I look at how events in Vietnam, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and other locales, were repackaged and presented to Chinese audiences within the context of themes like Third World revolution, decolonization, race, postcolonial development, and modernization.

Though these events were often depicted in exaggerated and at times essentialized manners, this should not diminish the extent to which these international happenings were *real* struggles in which *real* people fought for *real* ideas. So too was real and genuine popular Chinese concern for these events, their combatants, and their respective causes. No issue better highlights the importance of identifying the dual existence of *both* real concern *and* exaggerated

content quite like the Vietnamese struggle. Especially in the period from the Tonkin Gulf Incident in August 1964 through the earliest months of heavy U.S. intervention in early-to-mid-1965, the Vietnam War and domestic Chinese propaganda coverage were escalating rapidly. Accordingly, these months in 1965 saw a full-scale war scare in the PRC, as Party leaders grew concerned the war might spill over into southern China. While this war scare was genuine – with the Party even going to great pains to move heavy industries from China’s southern region to its interior – the threat was also inflated to help generate a “sense of constant crisis and combat,” which so often accompanied the CCP’s political campaigns and forged an important part of the context in which *domestic internationalism* was the function.⁴¹ China’s internationalist propaganda always blended realities from abroad with the Party’s politicized reading of these events. Even still, however, this does not mean we should take any less seriously why these arguments worked and ultimately resonated with their target audience.

Domestic internationalism also worked by drawing strength from its inherent regenerative quality. When mass rallies across the PRC were called to commemorate events transpiring in the Dominican Republic in 1965, for example, the ensuing weeks would see a stream of photos, songs, poems, pamphlets and other materials *about the rally* circulated around China. Here, the actual events a world away were being propagandized, but so too were the *Chinese* responses to the Dominican happenings. Both the thwarted Dominican coup *and* the popular Chinese support for it, *domestic internationalism* asserted, were events in the world revolutionary struggle. Ordinary Chinese people were quite literally written into the narrative of a world in flux. As nearly all of the mediums covered in this dissertation demonstrate, this

⁴¹ Westad, *Restless Empire*, 321. On the PRC’s contingency plans in the event of the war’s spillover into China, see Lorenz M. Lüthi, “The Vietnam War and China’s Third-Line Defense Planning before the Cultural Revolution, 1964-1966,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 10 (1), (2008): 26-51.

capacity of *domestic internationalism* to reproduce itself served well its effort to penetrate deep and continuously into everyday Chinese life through these years.

This dissertation argues that *domestic internationalism* played a critical role in the making of China's Cultural Revolution. In support of this thesis, I put forth three core arguments. First, though the strategy of *domestic internationalism* had existed before the 1960s, after 1962 it was markedly revamped and intensified in the Party's effort to stem the tide of the comprehensive crisis it faced. Second, filtered through an extensive array of mediums, internationalist propaganda helped to forge a popular Chinese imagination of a vast, global community with a unique role for China (and themselves) to play within it. Third, on the strength of *domestic internationalism*'s resonance with a pervasive and popular Chinese nationalism, the strategy helped to reestablish the legitimacy of the CCP and the socialist revolution it championed. Accordingly, by 1966 propaganda about the world would play a central role in helping secure the popular mobilization necessary to launch the Cultural Revolution, and helped shape the revolutionary zeal and violent excesses of its early practice.

Interventions and Chapter Breakdown

Alongside introducing the concept of *domestic internationalism*, this study makes three important interventions into the existing literature. First, this project draws upon a uniquely diverse source base to trace a national phenomenon through its local manifestations. In so doing, I follow China's internationalist propaganda of the 1960s from its Party-level intentions, through its local-level application, down to its popular reception and resonance. I bring together research conducted in four major Chinese urban centers (Shanghai, Beijing, Xi'an, Wuhan), including

archival research at the regional, provincial, and municipal levels. I read these documents alongside the multi-media internationalist propaganda sources themselves, collected from a range of venues from antique markets to private collectors, and consisting of comic books to state plays to student mathematics workbooks. Finally, I position these materials alongside published Chinese primary and secondary sources, allowing me a holistic reconstruction of the as-yet only partially explored strategic deployment of internationalism across China's "forgotten years."

Second, this dissertation uses internationalist propaganda as a window into how state-society relations functioned in Mao's China. Here, I seek to bridge the gap between studies of the period focusing on *either* top-level Party politics *or* local developments on the ground in Chinese society at the time.⁴² Only by considering the needs and interests of *both* state *and* society, I argue, can we begin to conceptualize China's tumultuous 1960s and explain the PRC's otherwise perplexing path from the Great Leap Forward to the Cultural Revolution. By explaining how events a world away were brought to local audiences to solve national issues, I demonstrate how the Chinese state manipulated the deeply transnational global 1960s, bringing them in dialogue with Chinese nationalism, and facilitating their influence on everyday life across local China. This is a story that simply cannot be told merely from Beijing, nor only from the Chinese countryside; it is a story that exists precisely in the dynamic interaction between the two. A story that is at once top-down *and* bottom-up.

⁴² Here, I am great inspired by recent developments in the study of PRC history exemplified best by the efforts at crafting a "grassroots history" of Maoism in China. See Jeremy Brown and Matthew D. Johnson, "Introduction" in Brown and Johnson, eds., *Maoism at the Grassroots*.

Third, this study treats propaganda and its production as an interactive process between state and society. In Mao's China propaganda was never a never a one-way street.⁴³ Internationalist propaganda in the 1960s was no different. In analyzing this propaganda across the myriad forms in which it appeared at the time, I resist reading these Party issued narratives as top-down directives simply dropped onto the masses from above; Beijing needed to do far more than simply translate its ambitions into persuasive messages. The production of these narratives was always a kind of conversation between state and society, in which the Party needed to negotiate its intentions within the limited range of ideas that it felt would resonate with its mass target audience. In this interaction, I find Chinese audiences to retain a great deal of agency, and the ideas that mattered to them thus had to matter to Party propagandists.

Taking propaganda seriously, to be sure, is not without its methodological hazards. Like reading any state-sponsored narrative or naïvely approaching the state archive as a comprehensive catalogue of transparent documents, scholars must marshal a shrewd skepticism of what they are encountering. For this reason, I read PRC internationalist propaganda not merely for its content, but also more critically and sub-textually for how it was tailored and produced to accommodate pervasive popular values. I then place these narratives alongside internal Party reports, directives, and statistical surveys to determine how local Culture Bureaus and Propaganda Departments were carrying out Beijing's strategy on the ground, encountering successes and difficulties along the way. Though reading propaganda requires a careful and coordinated approach, understanding how and why these messages resonated with their target

⁴³ My reading of propaganda is inspired too by the work of Chiang-tai Hung on the early political culture of the PRC. While I spell out the differences in our respective points of emphasis above, Hung too privileges the contingent and negotiated nature of the state's effort to convey its political ideas to its constituents. He writes: "But although these collective values are initiated by the ruling elites, the process is never unilaterally imposed from above, as the leaders must constantly adjust their strategies in response to the reactions, sometimes resistance from below. The process, therefore, is a negotiated one..." (Hung, *Mao's New World*, 5-6)

audiences requires taking seriously the power and ideas behind them, and disrupting notions of them as merely an arbitrary arm of those in positions of authority.

This dissertation is divided into three parts. Part I will situate *domestic internationalism* and the PRC within their historical context on the eve of that strategy's revamping in 1962. Part II forms the bulk of this study, and sets out to trace this newly intensified and assertive internationalist propaganda across a number of different mediums between 1962-66. Part III will then bring us into the early Cultural Revolution (1966-68), examining how these stories of the wider world helped to inform and shape the movement's unparalleled zeal and violence.

Chapter 1 establishes the comprehensive crisis facing CCP leaders by 1962. Amidst the social, economic and political fallout of the Great Leap Forward, as well as the PRC's unfavorable geopolitical environment resulting from the Sino-Soviet split, the Party needed to win back Chinese hearts and minds to reestablish the legitimacy of the country's socialist revolution. Though *domestic internationalism* had been in the CCP playbook for years, it would now be revamped, tending to the Party's crisis context by reviving previously subdued ideas designed to resonate with Chinese audiences – ideas of Third World revolution, decolonization, race, postcolonial development, and modernization. By discursively and conceptually linking China's domestic revolution with events occurring abroad, the Party paved the way for this new look *domestic internationalism* to be called into action.

Part II begins with Chapter 2 and its reading of internationalist mass events as part of this revamped internationalist propaganda through 1962-66. Both annual holiday celebrations and mass protest rallies served as seemingly spontaneous (though heavily choreographed) venues in which Chinese attendees could imagine themselves part of both a national community supporting

events abroad, as well as a broad *transnational* community of world revolutionaries. The crowds at these events offered the Party a captivated – indeed, a captive – audience to whom they could present their ideas about the world. Periodicals and photographs circulated thereafter helped attendees and non-attendees alike become part of the narrative of world revolution themselves, their mere presence at these mass events itself a concrete act of support to the global struggle.

Chapter 3 explores *domestic internationalism*'s advance into audio-visual forms, focusing specifically on documentary films, photo exhibitions, and songs and musicals. These mediums brought the world to eyes and ears all across the PRC, enhancing and facilitating their audience members' imagination of a vast global community. Wrapping these stories in entertaining and stimulating forms, the Party helped to ensure their message would be received. By also incorporating into their content the popular Chinese *response* to events abroad, however, this audio-visual propaganda embraced China's revolutionary narcissism, playing to Chinese nationalism by Sinocentrically inserting the PRC into the narrative of otherwise foreign events.

Chapter 4 builds off of these arguments by looking in depth at several internationalist dramatic plays from China's mid-1960s. Dramatic forms offered yet another way in which a revamped *domestic internationalism* brought ideas about the world to people in enthralling and culturally relevant ways. Plays like *Letters from the South* (about southern Vietnamese guerillas) and *War Drums on the Equator* (regarding events in the Congo) were fitted into a variety of Chinese dramatic forms, effectively Sinicizing world revolution in the process. Further still, these stories were broken down into local and mass cultural forms including comic books and slideshows, allowing them to reach broader audiences deep in the countryside and occupying all points across the spectrum of society and cultural literacy.

Part III consists of Chapter 5 and its foray into the early Cultural Revolution. Here, I begin by looking at state-published texts attesting to Mao's worldwide appeal and the Cultural Revolution's world historic significance. I then examine how young Red Guards, endeavoring to carry out the Cultural Revolution and the revolutionary practice Mao sought for them, took up the production of these texts themselves, thereby evincing the popular resonance of *domestic internationalism's* arguments about the wider world and the Chinese revolution's place within it. This chapter concludes by examining how the movement's premium on its own worldwide importance effectively raised the stakes of its success and blurred the line between foreign and domestic enemies. This, in turn, opened the door to viewing domestic political threats through the nationalist lens of 'treason,' paving the way for the Cultural Revolution's descent into nativist xenophobia, and further facilitating its widespread violence.

Understanding how the dream of China's socialist modernity faded from the Chinese collective conscience requires making sense of the Cultural Revolution, a task demanding a return to the oft-forgotten years that preceded it. Those years – China's early-to-mid-1960s – were colored by broadly circulated ideas about the world beyond the PRC's borders, and where China and the Chinese people fit within that global schema. Even a cursory glance through a collection of propaganda posters from these years would reveal a host of foreign faces – from female Vietnamese guerrilla fighters, to tan-colored and rifle-wielding Latin Americans in sombreros, to conspicuously muscular black Africans often toting the remnants of a broken shackle around their wrist or ankle.

While such images are familiar to any observer of China and many beyond, they are almost always explained *only* with reference to the changing international context facing the

world and Chinese foreign policy minds in the heady, radical 1960s. It is the task of this study to turn such approaches back onto themselves, asking not what these images and narratives say about the global cultural zeitgeist at the time, but rather what it was about them that so captivated Chinese audiences and how it impacted how they thought of themselves.

PART I:

DOMESTIC INTERNATIONALISM UNRESTRAINED, 1962

Chapter 1: In Crisis, an Opportunity:

The Crisis of 1962, the Tenth Plenum, and *Domestic Internationalism* Revamped

By 1962, China was at a crossroads. Beset by comprehensive crisis – exemplified by nothing more accurately than the unimaginable human, economic, and ecological devastation wrought by the Great Leap Forward – the Chinese Communist Party leadership itself was fracturing. What was once Beijing’s unified vision of a socialist path to Chinese modernity was now hotly contested. Where the People’s Republic of China was to go from here was, for the first time in a long time, unclear to Party leaders. The vaunted Helmsman himself, Mao Zedong, watched from the sidelines as other top leaders tried to pick up the pieces.

While some saw in crisis the opportunity to steer the PRC toward a more tempered, stable and pragmatic course, the Chairman unsurprisingly disagreed. For Mao, if the Great Leap and its ensuing famine had discredited the pursuit of radical economic planning, it had done nothing to shake his abiding faith in the revolutionary human spirit. If the order of the day was to restore popular Chinese confidence in the country’s socialist enterprise, deepening China’s revolution politically – if not economically – would be the approach. It had worked in Yan’an in the 1940s, in the nascent PRC in the early 1950, and it would work again now, Mao was sure. If he had to begrudgingly watch the pragmatists – Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, most notably – chart an economic course that ran anathema to his own utopian dreams, he would not relinquish the revolution’s political realm. Through mass mobilization for a series of political campaigns, Mao felt, the revolution would be saved and its dream salvaged.

Much as they had before, these mass mobilization efforts would be supported by an extensive and elaborate infrastructure of state-led, Party-crafted propaganda narratives. As an essential component to the CCP’s propaganda toolbox, stories privileging global events and internationalist themes would play an integral role in the Party’s post-1962 political ambitions.

Indeed, this strategy of *domestic internationalism* was itself, by this time, a well-tested mechanism. Instrumentalizing ideas about the wider world to serve domestic political ends had already aided the Party at critical junctures in the PRC's young history and even before. From the Japanese invasion and occupation of China in the late-1930s and early-to-mid-1940s, through the Korean War and the Great Leap Forward, using the global to mobilize the local was firmly ensconced in the CCP playbook. But the 1960s would present a different problem in need of a different *domestic internationalism*.

Indeed, the crisis faced by the CCP in 1962 was unlike anything they had experienced before in their thirteen years at the helm of the PRC. In addition to the vast fallout of the Great Leap Forward and its political aftershocks, the country was losing its footing internationally. Beijing's rift with Moscow was now open and acrimonious, and gave the Party every reason to fear it was on the verge of international isolation. To a Chinese audience, the optics and prospects of the Chinese revolution were concerning. It was incumbent on the Party to paint a picture of a world more favorable to the Chinese revolution, and more conducive to its eventual achievement of a socialist modernity; *domestic internationalism* needed to be revamped.

With a rejuvenation of the revolution in mind, Mao initiated this process in late 1962 at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth CCP Central Committee. Discursively fusing together the domestic and international realms, the Tenth Plenum offered a conceptual link that more easily facilitated imagining a connection between events a world away and one's local, everyday existence. Over the ensuing years, a revamped *domestic internationalism* would forge persuasive and resonating arguments about Third World revolution, decolonization, race, postcolonial development, and modernization, seating these themes in enthralling elucidations of ongoing events in Vietnam, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, and even the American South.

It would paint a story of a world that was at once frightening but promising, threatening but hopeful. If struggle was everywhere and war loomed, history and destiny were on the side of the progressive, revolutionary peoples of the world – China’s side.

This revamped domestic deployment of internationalism diffused itself through Chinese society much more extensively than it ever had before. From mass rallies to photo exhibitions, from films to stage plays, from comic books to ‘foreign friends,’ the wider world was around every street corner in China’s 1960s. Political training programs marshaled the full array of these mediums, ensuring anyone and everyone looked out at the world, grew passionate about what they saw, and carried that passion back into their own lives. If they did this, Party propagandists believed, the CCP and the revolution it served might regain its footing, winning back Chinese hearts and minds made weary by heretofore-unfilled promises and the implicit skepticism that came with them.

This chapter argues that late 1962 – and the Tenth Plenum in particular – signaled a turning point in *domestic internationalism*. Though the strategy was not new to the CCP, after this moment it would be revamped to summon a host of themes previously subdued, doing so more comprehensively than ever before. Part II of this dissertation will then trace this revamped internationalist propaganda across a variety of its forms, demonstrating how it helped to mobilize for, and shape the early violence of, the Cultural Revolution.

This chapter begins by recounting briefly how *domestic internationalism* functioned in the CCP playbook before 1962. It then turns to the comprehensive crisis besetting the PRC and the CCP by 1962, describing how China’s failings at home and abroad were undermining the CCP as well as the revolution upon which its legitimacy rested. I then delve into late-1962’s Tenth Plenum, explaining how the conceptual linkage it forged between China’s domestic

revolution and events around the world ushered in a revamped strategy of *domestic internationalism*. Finally, this chapter sketches out this revamped internationalism in China's 1960s, unpacking its argument about the world, the contexts upon which it relied, and the tactics and mediums through which it made its way to eyes and ears, hearts and minds across the PRC.

Domestic Internationalism Before 1962

The strategic use of internationalism as a trope in domestically deployed propaganda to serve political ends, was not unique to China's 1960s. In fact, the Chinese Communist Party had drawn upon internationalist themes and global events to boost its own domestic appeal at several points over its previous decade at the helm of the PRC, and even before it had consolidated and established its regime there. Owing to its ability to draw upon a latent and ever-present Chinese nationalism that yearned for China's pursuit of a strong and modern state, internationalism was a valuable tool in the Party's propaganda arsenal.

But *domestic internationalism* existed differently then. Owing, in no small measure, to the CCP's abiding allegiance to the socialist camp in the years before its infamous rift with Moscow, the arguments the Party put forth in this internationalist propaganda were never as diverse and intricate as the themes and ideas it would unveil *after* 1962. Instead, in the 1940-50s, *domestic internationalism* largely drew upon events and issues directly implicating China and celebrating socialism first and foremost. And though such rudimentary themes of safeguarding China's national security and celebrating socialist unity were also present after 1962 – most notably in treatments of Vietnam – they would be joined in this period by a host of more robust and dynamic arguments about race, revolution, postcolonial development, and modernization. In the 1940s and 1950s, however, Chinese internationalism was restrained.

From its earliest days, the CCP had viewed the Chinese revolution within the context of the world proletarian revolutionary movement.¹ Not only would a socialist revolution spur China toward strength and modernity, the Party held, but it would also serve an important function for the worldwide revolutionary movement. Accordingly, even in the years before the founding of the PRC in 1949, the CCP shrewdly drew upon this concept of the revolution's dual importance to serve its own political needs.

This was particularly true during the years of Japanese invasion and occupation between 1937-45, and in the immediate years thereafter. From its base in Yan'an, the Party began experimenting with its ideas for land reform in the surrounding Shan-Gang-Ning region. As they began the process of reclaiming land from exploitative landlords to redistribute these plots to local farmers, the plan was premised on actively and publicly vilifying these original landholders so that farmers and villagers might see them for the oppressive class opportunists they were. As Party officials led locals in assembling damning cases against these landlords, they reminded them of incidences where they had actively colluded with, or *de facto* abetted, Japanese forces during the war.² This treachery against the Chinese nation, combined with their slave-like treatment of tenant farmers, effectively tarnished these landowners in the eyes of locals, and played a significant role in cementing land reform as a key component in the CCP's argument for Chinese socialism. Unsurprisingly, bringing the international realm to bear on local populations would remain a mobilizing tool in the practice of land reform in the PRC's early years, as well.

¹ See Niu Jun, *From Yan'an to the World: The Origin and Development of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy*, Edited and Translated by Steven I. Levine, (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2005), 2.

² See Andrew G. Walder, *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 45-47.

Indeed, after seizing power in October 1949 and proclaiming the People's Republic, the Party continued to find value in *domestic internationalism* as they sought to consolidate their regime. Some of the most foundational myths about both the CCP and the PRC were internationalist in nature – most prominently, that the Party's victory derived from defeating militarily their Japanese invaders, and that it was the CCP's signature guerilla warfare tactics that secured that triumph.³ Though, as Andrew Walder spells out, the Party's guerilla strategy was more a survival tactic whilst it “intentionally avoided direct confrontation” with the Japanese, and although its ultimate path to victory came through “fighting rival Chinese forces in conventional warfare,” the CCP reaped (and continues to reap) invaluable political legitimacy from propagating these myths.⁴

At no time was this legitimacy stronger than in the early years of the PRC, and the Party's initial programs at the helm saw a further application of *domestic internationalism*. This strategy was firmly on display as the Party sought to link up the consolidation of its rule at home with events occurring abroad. While land reform was to be carried out across vast rural regions and as the ‘campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries’ (*zhenya fangeming*, or *zhenfan*) sought to identify and eliminate potential irritants to the ruling Party, war was breaking out on the Korean peninsula. As historians Yang Kuisong and Chen Jian have argued, these domestic and international events were deeply intertwined, with the Korean War offering the CCP a mobilizing boon to its crucial political campaigns at home.⁵ In Chen's estimation, the nascent

³ See *Ibid.*, 16-19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵ See Yang, “Reconsidering the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries,” 102-121, and Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*. See also, Masuda, *Cold War Crucible*.

PRC's political undertaking at home would have been "inconceivable" during these early years absent the "stimulat[ion]" offered by the Korean War.⁶

Few things facilitated *domestic internationalism* better than an atmosphere of war. As prominent Party leader Liu Shaoqi himself put it in May 1951,

Once the gongs and drums of resisting the United States and assisting Korea begin to make a deafening sound, the gongs and drums of the land reform and suppression of counter-revolutionaries become barely audible, and the latter becomes much easier to implement. Without the loud gongs and drums of resisting the United States and assisting Korea, those of land reform (and *zhenfan*) would make unbearable noise. Here a landlord is killed and there another is beaten; there would be fuss everywhere... Things would then become difficult.⁷

Events in Korea offered the Party an unparalleled internationalist backdrop to unfold their early campaigns of domestic political consolidation. The ensuing 'resist America, support Korea' movement in the PRC witnessed an enormous outpouring of propaganda, across a vast array of audio-visual mediums. An important precedent was being set, and events in Vietnam over a decade later would spark a movement very much crafted in its mold. In the meantime, however, the instrumentalization of the Korean War to serve domestic ends cemented the strategic import of *domestic internationalism* in the Party's early practice of rule. Internationalism became ensconced, as Chang-tai Hung finds, as a component part of the new political culture the Party was crafting for the PRC.⁸

While the strategic deployment of internationalism at home continued throughout the 1950s, the Great Leap Forward would offer the next major test of its capacity to secure political mobilization on a massive scale. A quixotic attempt to expedite China's industrialization on the back of unattainably idealistic grain harvests, the Great Leap was premised on mobilizing Chinese people across all sectors of society to contribute everything they had. Accordingly, the

⁶ Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*, 220.

⁷ Quoted in Yang, "Reconsidering the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries," 105, and in Westad, *Restless Empire*, 322.

⁸ See Hung, *Mao's New World*.

campaign required a comprehensive propaganda onslaught, at least a part of which would be satisfied by narratives drawing upon the international realm. Indeed, from the very beginning, the Great Leap was explicitly billed as China's route to catching up and surpassing the industrial capacities of the U.S. and Great Britain.⁹ But its instrumentalization of the global realm would run deeper still.

Drawing upon the precedent of Korea but lacking the wartime atmosphere it offered, Mao decided to incite his own mobilizing mood. Seizing upon the ever-present and unsettled issue of Taiwan, the Chairman elected to shell the Taiwan-controlled island of Jinmen for over four weeks in August-September 1958. Further still, in response to the U.S. and British landing of troops in Lebanon (following the coup in Iraq which brought to power the left-leaning government of Abd al-Karim Qasim), the CCP spoke out angrily on the matter and orchestrated protest demonstrations in several PRC cities.¹⁰ Mao was securing for the Great Leap Forward an environment of crisis. As the Chairman himself described,

...A tense [international] situation can mobilize the population, can particularly mobilize the backward people, can mobilize the people in the middle, and can therefore promote the Great Leap Forward in economic construction.¹¹

Once this context had been set, Party propaganda sprung into action, discursively and conceptually linking Great Leap construction with events abroad.¹² As Mayor of Beijing Peng Zhen declared at a September rally against U.S. actions in the Middle East,

Comrades and fellow countrymen! Gone for ever is the day when China used to be carved up and enslaved by others. We are the masters of a resplendent New China. In order to defend our great motherland, halt U.S. imperialist provocations, build our country into a powerful socialist state, and accomplish the sacred task of unification of our motherland, our heroic soldiers and officers are bravely guarding our front, our People's Liberation Army will do all they can to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country. All people in the rear, in city and countryside, must

⁹ See, for example, Niu Chung-Huang, *China Will Overtake Britain*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1958). See too Walder, *China Under Mao*, 156.

¹⁰ See Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 175.

¹¹ Quoted in *Ibid.*

¹² For more examples of this, see Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, Chapter 6.

be mobilized. They must further rouse their energies and exert themselves to push ahead the great leap in our production: producing more iron, steel, machinery and grain. We must establish on a wide scale and develop people's communes...¹³

Drawing upon the Taiwan issue *and* events in the Middle East, Peng imparted to people all across the PRC the vast significance of their own actions in the Great Leap Forward. Though the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis would further impair Sino-American relations and the Great Leap Forward would prove catastrophic in practice, *domestic internationalism* had satisfied the Party's needs, convincing a Chinese audience of the international relevance of their actions and stirring them into action partly on the strength of that.

Even before China's tumultuous 1960s, therefore, *domestic internationalism* had solidified itself as a useful tool in the Party's propaganda arsenal and mass mobilization playbook. Both before it even had a state of its own, as well as for a decade after the establishment of the PRC, the CCP drew upon the Chinese revolution's dual importance – to China's modern development and to the international socialist movement – to use global events and internationalist themes to inspire Chinese political participation at home. By the 1960s, this practice was tried and tested.

At the same time, however, the themes, characters, and content which colored the CCP's use of *domestic internationalism* was qualitatively different in the period before the 1960s, than it was during that decade. Though, to be sure, the PRC's impactful role at the 1954 Geneva Conference (regarding Indochina) and the 1955 Bandung Conference did indeed usher in what Chen Jian calls a "Bandung discourse," under which the PRC would "revolutioniz[e] the

¹³ "Mayor Peng Chen's Speech at the Peking People's Rally Supporting the Statement of the Chinese Government and Opposing U.S. Aggression," in *Oppose U.S. Military Provocations in the Taiwan Straits Area (A Selection of Important Documents)*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1958), 30-31. (sic)

worldwide process of decolonization.”¹⁴ This fact notwithstanding, Beijing would not immediately or actively incorporate these ideas into its internationalist propaganda at home in the 1950s with nearly the same intensity with which it would in the 1960s. While CCP leaders, as Chen argues, cared deeply about these issues of decolonization, postcolonial development and the Third World pursuit of modernity – and indeed felt passionately about them even *before* Bandung – the Party’s internationalist propaganda to this point tended instead to emphasize mainly events directly implicating the PRC or celebrating socialist solidarity.

The reason for this is not esoteric. Until the late 1950s, the Sino-Soviet alliance was alive and well. From infrastructural loans, to technical expert training, to moral support, to national security, the Soviet Union served a critically important role for the young, vulnerable, and developing People’s Republic of China. Though CCP leaders (to say nothing of the Chinese people themselves) would have no doubt preferred *not* to have to play ‘younger brother’ to the Soviet Union (or anyone else), in the early 1950s China was in no position to be scoffing at a junior membership in the socialist bloc. Indeed, in accordance with the so-called ‘division of labor’ agreement it forged with Moscow over 1949-50, the CCP had agreed to promote revolution in “the East” while the Soviets would focus on “the West” and continue to be the leader directing world revolution.¹⁵ And though, by the mid-1950s, Mao and other Party leaders recognized Beijing was much better positioned than was Moscow to promote decolonization and Third World revolution, they did not trumpet these themes as loudly as they would after 1962.

Indeed, it was only *after* the Sino-Soviet split was open and acrimonious that Beijing no longer felt compelled to adhere to its ‘division of labor’ with Moscow, and could more freely promote the full range of values and ideas it had long held. It is for this reason, therefore, that

¹⁴ Chen, “Bridging Revolution and Decolonization,” 231.

¹⁵ See *Ibid.*, 216. See also, Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 44.

domestic internationalism in the 1960s appeared different in tenor and in content from its previous incarnations. Rather than reading the Party's internationalist propaganda during these years as evidence for a "new [Chinese] worldview...produced" by the Sino-Soviet split, as does Zachary Scarlett, I instead see continuity in Beijing's interest with issues of decolonization, race, postcolonial development, and Third World revolution, dating back well before the 1960s.¹⁶ Before 1962, these ideas were simply tempered; silenced in the interest of socialist solidarity with Moscow. In that year, however, the CCP found itself beset by a comprehensive crisis, the type *domestic internationalism* was designed to aid. Amidst the now-rancorous Sino-Soviet split, Beijing no longer needed to subdue its own voice and ideas about the world.

The Comprehensive Crisis of 1962

Though the first decade of the People's Republic had experienced its share of glories and of pain, by the early 1960s the country was reeling. At the forefront of its misery was unquestionably the once-unimaginable fallout of the Great Leap Forward – the human cost unparalleled, the economic cost steep, the political cost hefty. Indeed, the CCP and its socialist ideology were so humbled by the calamity, political in-fighting commenced and the seemingly unassailable Mao Zedong was swept to the sidelines, barred from active policymaking while the economic plan was realigned.

Things were little better for China internationally. The dirty laundry of the Sino-Soviet rift had been aired for the global public to see, and their spat would escalate further still over the coming years.¹⁷ Beyond Beijing and Moscow, however, the PRC was now alienated from most

¹⁶ Scarlett, "China After the Sino-Soviet Split," 13.

¹⁷ On the Sino-Soviet polemic debate throughout 1963-64 specifically, and the worsening of their disagreements more generally, see Wu Lengxi, *Shinian lunzhan, 1956-1966: Zhong-Su guanxi huiyilu* [Ten Years of Polemics: A

of the socialist bloc, and risked being isolated too from the rapidly emerging Third World amidst the unfolding second wave of decolonization. China's brief but troubling war with India along their shared border in October 1962 did them no favors in this regard. For some international observers, the PRC was exposing itself as a hostile pariah, aggressive toward the west, the socialist world, and evidently fellow states of the Afro-Asian-Latin American Third World too.

The Chinese revolution was failing and it was flailing. As its stewards, the CCP and its political legitimacy were faring no better. Though improving the country's image abroad was necessary, the main focus for Party leaders tending to their crisis of legitimacy was, as always, their domestic constituency. It was into this comprehensive crisis, and the Party's dire need to re-win Chinese hearts and minds, that *domestic internationalism* would be called into action.

At the heart of China's troubles in the early 1960s was the calamitous Great Leap Forward. Though the Leap's planning was inherently flawed, – from the fantasy of its lofty grain targets and rapid steel production to the unsustainable all-you-can-eat cafeterias of the People's Communes – its failure must be distinguished from its fallout.¹⁸ As Andrew Walder succinctly puts it, “the Leap's failure was inevitable, but disaster was not.”¹⁹ Indeed a host of circumstances plaguing the plan's implementation and practice worked to considerably deepen whatever failure was to inevitably ensue. At the center of these issues was the lingering political

Memoir on Sino-Soviet Relations, 1956-1966], 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe [Central Documents Press], 1999), 633-639, Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 274-285, and Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*, 73-74.

¹⁸ On the absurdly high grain and steel quotas, see Walder, *China Under Mao*, 156-157. On the communal kitchens of the People's Communes, see Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962*, Translated by Stacey Mosher and Guo Jian, Edited by Edward Friedman, Guo Jian, and Stacey Mosher, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 174-196.

¹⁹ Walder, *China Under Mao*, 152.

climate of the virulent Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957-59), with its intolerance on dissenting opinions and its insistence on supporting the Party's guiding line.

This coercive landscape precluded critiques of the CCP's unrealistic goals and, at least for a time, insulated leaders at the top from the bone-chilling realities of the Great Leap's segue into the Great Famine.²⁰ In other instances, the reports offered to Party officials were fraught with fudged numbers and fabricated achievements, lower-level cadres terrified to admit failure. In a scenario that would considerably exacerbate food shortages in the countryside, still other cadres (following orders from the top) shipped grain from imperiled rural areas to major urban centers in an effort to keep up appearances there while the hinterland withered.

The human toll of the Great Leap disaster and famine was staggering, and remains a point of debate amongst scholars of the period. Early demographers estimated the casualties between 28 and 30 million. One recent authoritative chronicle of the famine raises that number to over 36 million, while Frank Dikötter posits "at least 45 million people died unnecessarily between 1958 and 1962."²¹ Though scholars have only been able to piece these numbers together in recent decades following the release of census data from the era, and while Party leaders at the time were likely unaware of the dizzying death totals, there is no doubt they understood the magnitude of the demographic crisis the Great Leap had initiated by 1962.²²

As the Leap's starry-eyed grain and steel targets plunged these industries into shambles, the Chinese economy tumbled accordingly. Andrew Walder positions its collapse "as severe" as the U.S. Great Depression in the early 1930s, with a 35 percent drop in per capita income

²⁰ In the second installment of his scathing three-part indictment of the CCP during the Mao-era, Frank Dikötter presents a top Party leadership that was not so much insulated from news of the famine unfolding across the PRC during the Great Leap as they were (and Mao most prominently) "insensitive to human loss" (see Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, (New York: Walker & Co., 2010), xiii).

²¹ Yang, *Tombstone*, x, and Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine*, x.

²² On the relatively recent demographic conclusions offered by those analyzing released census data from the Great Leap period, see Walder, *China Under Mao*, 169.

between 1959 and 1962.²³ And though the PRC's economy would begin to turn a corner after 1962, largely on the strength of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping seizing its reigns, there were vast socio-political costs to the steep human and economic losses the Leap had wrought. As food shortages mounted throughout the period, disease, begging, fighting, theft, and even armed robbery became tools of survival.²⁴ These realities flew in the face of the socialist dream the Party had promised; the dream was dying, replaced by a nightmare. In the test set out by everyday lived experience, the Chinese revolution was failing. Its ideology had been blemished, its custodians in Beijing discredited. The once-stable legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party was beginning to crack.

Within the Party leadership the same crisis of faith was playing out. A political gulf was emerging between two factions. On one side was Mao, the central proponent behind the Leap's doomed push for the 'rash advance' of agricultural production.²⁵ Joining the Chairman were a coterie of loyalists, most notable among them Lin Biao, head of the Chinese military. On the other side, were those who viewed the Great Leap disaster as so extenuating a circumstance as to warrant challenging Mao's line. Here, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and, to a far lesser extent, Zhou Enlai, mounted the charge. Indeed, critiquing Mao's pursuit of 'rash advance' had already yielded one major political casualty in Marshal Peng Dehuai, the highly decorated Korean War veteran who never recovered from his ill-fated letter to Mao at the 1959 Lushan Conference, in which he critiqued many elements of the Leap's planning and practice. Liu and Deng, their courage notwithstanding, were embarking down a precarious path.

At the January 1962 Seven Thousand Cadres Conference, held in Beijing and attended by Party committee officials at several levels of rank from across the country, Liu and Deng

²³ Ibid., 178.

²⁴ See Ibid., 173.

²⁵ On 'rash advance,' see Ibid., 153.

presented their case. Liu in particular critiqued not only the faulty local-level implementation of the Leap's policies, but also the inherent flaws of these ideas themselves.²⁶ Here, the Chairman was coming under direct attack, and Liu would go on to directly challenge the rosy portrait of the Great Leap situation Mao himself sought to table. Over the ensuing months, Mao would reluctantly allow Liu to head up recovery measures designed to realign the economy.²⁷ Particularly alarming to Mao were rural experiments with individual plots of household agriculture – schemes anathema to the Chairman's dream of collectivized agriculture and commune farming. Now on the sidelines of policymaking, however, Mao was helpless.

Though he would continue to be formally celebrated and verbally lauded with regularity by his peers, Mao's credibility within the Party had taken a serious hit. His own confidence in his vision, however, remained unshaken. Indeed, though Liu and Deng's economic recovery efforts had begun to show promise even midway through 1962, Mao saw in them cause for concern about the future of China's socialist path. As Walder describes, Mao "tolerated these changes" as "temporary concessions," but by no means accepted their correctness over his insistence that class struggle and continuous revolution continued to be relevant.²⁸ If the Chinese people did not maintain their vigilance, Mao feared, capitalist elements would come creeping back into the PRC. This fear would inspire Mao to return to action in late 1962 determined to deepen the Chinese revolution in an effort to save it. Before he would do that, however, his fears would be exacerbated by the likewise bleak international context facing China at the time.

By 1962, the international landscape a young PRC once seemed poised to navigate deftly had been altered dramatically. At the center of nearly all Beijing's international woes was the

²⁶ See *Ibid.*, 181-185, and MacFarquhar, *Origins*, vol. 3, 137-181.

²⁷ On these measures of economic recovery, see Walder, *China Under Mao*, 183-184.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

now public and vitriolic Sino-Soviet split. Over a series of run-ins commencing in the wake of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 diatribe against the policies and practices of his predecessor Joseph Stalin, the once formidable Beijing-Moscow axis began to crumble. The Soviet campaign of de-Stalinization immediately seemed to threaten the system Mao had put in place in the PRC, the cult-based style defining his own leadership, and the extensive championing of Stalin the CCP had promoted domestically since it took power.²⁹ Further still, Mao felt betrayed by Khrushchev's apparent duplicity toward the revolutionary cause on the international stage, preferring instead to pursue 'peace coexistence' with the U.S. and avoid open conflict. The Mao-Khrushchev interaction was fraught, and with it came a seemingly unending series of clashes over the late-1950s and early-1960s.

In Mao's estimation, Khrushchev did not take seriously the revolutionary path he envisioned for the PRC. Worse still, at times Mao felt Khrushchev was even interfering with domestic Chinese affairs. In the case of both Taiwan and Tibet, – two international issues the CCP deemed internal Chinese affairs – Mao was irritated Khrushchev did not more actively support the PRC's position. When, during 1958's Taiwan Strait Crisis and 1959's Tibetan Uprising and (first) Sino-Indian border conflict, Khrushchev criticized what he considered Chinese aggression, Mao was incensed.³⁰ The Soviet leader's cozy relations with India's Jawaharlal Nehru would again annoy Mao when the two countries did battle a second time in late 1962.

Beyond the geopolitical realm, Mao felt Khrushchev also undermined China's revolution at home. The Soviet leader was an early critic of the Great Leap Forward, and Soviet skepticism

²⁹ Literature covering the Sino-Soviet split in the 1950s and 1960s has grown extensively in recent years. For two of the more specialized yet comprehensive accounts, see Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split* and Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens*.

³⁰ See Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, Chapters 3-4.

in the face of Mao's utopianism was at least partially behind Khrushchev's July 1960 decision to withdraw all Soviet technical advisors from the PRC.³¹ The loss of these Soviet advisors was a heavy blow, situated as they were across a vast array of infrastructural projects all throughout the country.³² Beyond the barbs, then, the Sino-Soviet rift was causing tangible harm to the Chinese revolution and its livelihood.

By 1962, the rift was giving way to a full-blown split. Worse still, the Beijing-Moscow breakup was common knowledge around the world, painting an unflattering image of a once-unified socialist bloc. Where the Soviet Union still had its satellite allies across Eastern Europe, however, the PRC was now almost entirely isolated from that community, save for a largely token (though disproportionately celebrated) union with Albania.³³ Though the PRC would, over the ensuing few years, seek to alleviate its threatening isolation by striving to expand its influence across the decolonizing Third World, its task now was made more difficult, uncertain, and the stakes were considerably higher. Beijing's aggressive anti-Americanism, its well-publicized falling out with Moscow, and rumblings of its radical Great Leap endeavors at home, all rendered its effort to effectively court many new friends across Asia, Africa, and Latin America that much harder.³⁴ Its October 1962 war with India along their shared border would do them no favors in this regard as well.

³¹ See *Ibid.*, 109-110, 174-180.

³² See, for example, Thomas P. Bernstein and Hua-yu Li, eds., *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-Present*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), and Austin Jerslid, *The Sino-Soviet Alliance: An International History*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), Chapter 2.

³³ By virtue of its own falling out with Moscow, Enver Hoxha's socialist Albania aligned with the PRC on the grounds of the Soviet Union's betrayal of Marxism-Leninism.

³⁴ As Odd Arne Westad points out, Beijing's break with Moscow initially yielded the PRC a number of friendships across the Third World. But, as Westad also makes clear, these partnerships were largely with "Third World radicals," and "more moderate Asian and African regimes" were less willing to embrace the PRC (see Westad, *Restless Empire*, 334). The fact thus remains that in the early 1960s, the future of the PRC's foreign relations amidst the Sino-Soviet split was uncertain at best.

Despite sending Nehru three advance warning telegrams and subsequently withdrawing from all territory it conquered in steamrolling Indian forces, the PRC's image did not emerge from the 1962 Sino-Indian border war unscathed. Indeed, the war made Beijing appear as an aggressor in the conflict, and as an unpredictable international actor more broadly.³⁵ Further still, this was qualitatively different from going to war against a U.S. or UN-led force as the PRC had in Korea. India was a fellow non-white, colonial victim, and one with whom the PRC was supposed to be collaborating for the sake of Third World solidarity. Nehru's efforts to canoodle with both Moscow and Washington aside, the optics of the PRC's war with India were negative and would exacerbate its increasingly unstable international footing.

To be sure, the PRC was not entirely isolated internationally as relations with the USSR soured. Indeed, its sturdy friendship with North Vietnam and several new relationships it would gain across Africa during the early-to-mid-1960s would form an important part of the CCP's deployment of *domestic internationalism* in the years before the Cultural Revolution. At the same time, these partnerships always appeared exaggerated and inflated in these domestically-deployed propaganda narratives, and fixating on them hides the very real anxieties harbored by PRC leaders as they gazed out at the global landscape during this period. In late 1962, amidst its break from the Soviet Union and its armed conflict with India, the PRC had no powerful allies and was surrounded by hostile regimes. This was not the place in the world order Mao and other CCP leaders had planned for New China; alongside the country's domestic calamities, the Chinese revolution was in crisis.

Taken together, by late 1962 China's struggles at home and abroad appeared to augur that the Chinese revolution was failing to deliver on its promise of a socialist modernity. As the stewards of the revolution, the CCP's own legitimacy was threatened and waning. From here, it

³⁵ Garver, *China's Quest*, 181.

would need to win back hearts and minds disillusioned by all they were seeing and experiencing firsthand. To do so, Mao was bent on returning from the sidelines of the Party to reinvigorate the revolution through a series of political campaigns premised on mass mobilization. At the forefront of these campaigns were the Four Clean-ups, the Five Antis, and the Socialist Education Movement, the latter now understood to have been a ‘dress rehearsal’ for the eventual Cultural Revolution.³⁶ A number of minor campaigns ran concurrently, feeding into the larger movements with their various calls to “Learn from Comrade Lei Feng” and “Learn from the People’s Liberation Army.”³⁷ If the Party could draw PRC citizens into these campaigns, their faith in China’s revolutionary enterprise might be restored, their commitment to achieving a Chinese socialist modernity regained.

It is here that *domestic internationalism* would be tasked with playing an important role in helping to shore up mass mobilization for these campaigns. By instrumentalizing ideas about the wider world, however exaggerated or imagined, the Party might craft an image of a promising global landscape - one in which China was a story of success, in which Beijing was the inspiration for countless postcolonial Third World nations, and in which history was turning in the direction of all progressive peoples. Before it might begin to craft this imagined world, however, the Party needed to lay the conceptual groundwork for a revamping of *domestic internationalism*. With Mao growing anxious from the sidelines of the Party and poised to make his return to the fore by late 1962, just the occasion had presented itself.

³⁶ The Four Clean-ups aimed to rectify corruption in “accounts, warehouses, assets, and work-points” in communes and at county-level administrations. The Five Antis was more urban-based, and sought to combat tendencies including: “corruption, profiteering, waste, decentralism, and bureaucracy” which were deemed to be blunting the revolution. The Socialist Education Movement consolidated these two campaigns, focusing first on family farming and corruption in Hebei and Hunan provinces, before expanding the program nationwide (see Guo Jian, Yongyi Song, and Yuan Zhou, *The A to Z of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009), 264).

³⁷ Lei Feng was a young PLA officer who exhibited selfless and heroic behavior before dying tragically. The “Learn from Comrade Lei Feng” was the most prominent of several such campaigns drawing on heroic martyrs (see MacFarquhar, *Origins*, vol. 3, 338-339).

Turning Point at the Tenth Plenum

By autumn 1962, Mao would sit quietly no longer whilst the Chinese revolution strayed from its ideals. Indeed, even before that fall, the Chairman had dressed down Liu Shaoqi in a closed-door meeting in which he lamented the erosion of the Three Red Banners (the ‘general line’ for socialist construction, the Great Leap Forward, and the People’s Communes).³⁸ That August, at a CCP work conference in the coastal retreat of Beidaihe, Mao began to draw parallels between capitalist and revisionist tendencies abroad and what he perceived to be the PRC’s departure from socialism in the Chinese countryside.³⁹ As late-September occasioned the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Congress of the Party’s Central Committee, Mao sensed his moment to return had arrived. Attended by just over 200 of the highest-ranking Party members, Mao knew he had the most influential eyes and ears in the country before him. This would be his chance to reassert the revolutionary character of China’s socialist path and initiate a deepening of this enterprise through a series of political campaigns to follow. As a component of this, the Chairman would seize this moment to set the table for a revamped strategy of *domestic internationalism* by redefining the close relationship between events around the world and the Chinese socialist project at home.

When the three-day conference (held from September 24-27) kicked off, Mao wasted little time. At 10 A.M. on the first day, at the famed Huai Ren Hall in the Zhongnanhai leadership compound, he followed a handful of opening speeches with his own impassioned remarks. Mao began by declaring that he wanted to speak about three problems: class, “the

³⁸ See Walder, *China Under Mao*, 184-185, and Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine*, 335-337 for accounts of this meeting.

³⁹ See Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 220-221.

situation,” and “contradictions.”⁴⁰ He then commenced what would become a deep intertwining of the international and domestic situations, looking at how class and contradiction (conflict, in Maoist discourse) played out in these two realms. In so doing, Mao would declare them to be two theatres of the same single struggle.

He began by identifying the PRC’s “task of supporting national liberation movements” being carried out by the “broad masses of people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.” “We want to unite,” Mao made clear, “with so many people.” But enemies abounded around the world. Yugoslavia, for example, – a favorite stand-in for the Soviet Union amongst CCP leaders – was a cautionary tale of a socialist state reverting back toward capitalism. From here, Mao pivoted to China’s revolution at home. “We must raise our vigilance” against such frightful scenarios, never allowing this to happen in the PRC, by “properly educat[ing] our youth as well as the cadres,” amongst other strategies.⁴¹ Indeed, “if our children’s generation go in for revisionism,” the Chairman warned, they might “nominally have socialism [which] is in fact capitalism.” The very future of Chinese revolutionaries, and thus the revolution itself, was at stake.

He delved deeper still into how external and internal threats were one and the same. Acknowledging the Great Leap induced crisis over the preceding years, Mao hedged against “serious fault,” “large-scale mistakes,” and “things” “done wrongly” by stating that the Party’s “attention was diverted to opposing Khrushchev.”⁴² Sketching out Sino-Soviet disagreements, Mao too referenced ongoing Sino-Indian tensions and Khrushchev’s support for Nehru against the PRC. Lest this domestic-international context be overwhelmingly bleak, the Chairman then redeemed it saying, “the situation, it is good both internationally and domestically” before

⁴⁰ Mao Zedong, “Speech at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume VIII*, (Secunderabad, India: Kranti Publications, undated), 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2-3.

cataloguing a number of positive developments around the world. Zeroing in on national liberation struggles across the Third World, Mao highlighted Cuba, Algeria, Indonesia, South Vietnamese guerrillas, and Laos. He then identified the United Arab Republic and Iraq as two regimes that, although “inclined towards the right,” were still opposed to imperialism. “The international situation,” Mao made clear, “is excellent.”⁴³

Having established a favorable global setting through which one could feel hopeful, Mao was now set to bring it back to bear on China’s domestic tasks. He concluded the speech by identifying how the same struggle that must be (and is being) waged against the conspiring forces of imperialism and revisionism internationally, is imperative for China to wage domestically. “Right-wing opportunism in China,” he thus declared, “should be renamed: it should be called Chinese revisionism.” These revisionist elements in China ought to be cleansed in a style not unlike the Rectification Campaign of the early-to-mid-1940s in Yan’an. Here, Mao was paving the way for the mass mobilizing political campaigns that would soon follow with the Four Clean-Ups, the Five Antis, and eventually the Socialist Education Movement.

Mao’s speech at the Tenth Plenum was a masterful effort to forge discursively a conceptual linkage between events abroad and the revolution at home. Though, as historians have rightfully noted, the Chinese revolution carried this dual domestic-international significance from its earliest days, the line between two realms had never before been this blurred.⁴⁴ Mao and the Party leadership he now once again dominated were doubling down on this dual importance. The themes, characters, and content Party propagandists would cull from the wider world to bring to bear on domestic China would expand dramatically over the ensuing. Before that

⁴³ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁴ See Niu Jun, *From Yan’an to the World*, 2, and Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 7-8.

strategy would be deployed, however, Mao's ideas would be enshrined in the Tenth Plenum communiqué, thereafter circulated, studied, embedded amongst the broad masses they targeted.

The Tenth Plenum's communiqué towed closely to the template and tenor of Mao's speech. It began by painting a portrait of an international landscape "developing in a direction even more favorable to the people of all countries."⁴⁵ Walking through the various Third World causes Mao himself championed, it identified these as "important landmarks" in the struggles of all Asian, African, Latin American peoples. These people, along with the Chinese people, come together as a collective group of those who "refuse to be slaves" in the face of imperialism and revisionism. The PRC's "friends" have and will continue to "become more numerous." The communiqué then spring-boarded to China's domestic front, where things were said to be getting "slightly better" all the time.⁴⁶

Moving swiftly through improvements in agriculture and industry, the document asserted how the "people of our country have always united closely around the Central Committee of the Party" and Mao as its leader.⁴⁷ From here, it quickly shifted back to the international realm, referencing China's various enemies around the world, before declaring,

At home, those landlords, rich peasants and bourgeois rightists who have not reformed themselves and the remnant counter-revolutionaries also gloated over our difficulties and tried to take advantage of the situation. But the imperialists and their running-dogs *in China and abroad* completely miscalculated. All their criminal activities have not only further exposed their hideous features but have heightened the socialist and patriotic fervour of our people in working vigorously for the prosperity of our country. Our people have resolutely smashed and will continue to smash every one of their scheming activities, be it intrusion, provocation or aggression, or subversion within our state or our Party.⁴⁸

Class struggle, waged against these "foreign and domestic class enemies," would be China's solution going forward. All Chinese people must "remain vigilant" if these enemies are to be

⁴⁵ "Communique of the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of The Communist Party of China," *Peking Review*, 39 (September 28, 1962), 5. (sic)

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7. (emphasis mine) (sic)

successfully repelled. From here, the communiqué moved back to sketching out various policy orientations for a number of domestic fields, before concluding on a hopeful note amidst an otherwise alarming call to arms: “Our future is bright.” “Provided the whole Party and the whole nation,” it stipulated, remained “united as one,” “we will certainly be able...to usher in a new period of great upsurge in our country’s socialist construction.”⁴⁹

Following in step with Mao’s speech, the Tenth Plenum communiqué consolidated the conceptual blurring between the international and the domestic. The path to China’s socialist modernity remained clear, but the struggle necessary to arrive there had to be waged on both the global and the local fronts, abroad and at home. In the immediate wake of the Tenth Plenum, the communiqué would be circulated widely and studied extensively in accordance with the Party’s directives. The way was being cleared for a revamped *domestic internationalism* to be deployed.

In a scene that was replicated all over the PRC in late-1962 and early-1963, in November 1962 the Shanghai Propaganda Department sketched out how they wanted the city’s people to be educated on the Tenth Plenum’s innovations. Its communiqué should be studied to help the “strengthening of education for the masses on the international-domestic situation and its obligations.”⁵⁰ This will help solidify their education on “internationalism, patriotism, and socialism,” so they might establish “the conviction that we must win in our opposition to imperialism, modern revisionism, and reactionaries.” This will also work to help build for them a belief in the “moral character of communism.”

This study should be carried out, the directive went on, using a variety of means including oral reports, newspaper readings sessions, explanatory forums, informal discussions,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁰ Zhongguo Gongchandang Shanghaishi Weiyuanhui Xuanchaunbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Guanyu renmin qunzhong xuexi dangde bajie shizhong quanhui gongbao de juti yaoqiu he banfa [Regarding Specific Instructions and Methods for the People’s Study of the Tenth Plenum Communiqué],” November 16, 1962, Shanghai Municipal Archives, Shanghai, The People’s Republic of China, [hereafter: SMA], B123-5-623, 3.

and other discussion exchanges.⁵¹ At these events, officials should consider using a host of tactics, among them tours, visits by special guests, exhibitions, and talks given by old workers and farmers who will attest to the development of a favorable international-domestic situation by “recalling the past to compare it to the present” (*huiyi duibi*). The events would take place at a number of different venues designed to attract as large of crowds as possible. These included cultural halls, youth halls, cultural centers, social clubs, libraries, and reading rooms. In addition to engaging with people verbally about their study of the Tenth Plenum communiqué, officials should incorporate other “propaganda tools” such as chalkboard newspapers (*heibanbao*), wall newspapers (*qiangbao*), and radio broadcasts.

The Shanghai Propaganda Department was explicit in how they hoped study of the Tenth Plenum would propel people to participate in a variety of ongoing political campaigns. “In study,” their directive outlined, cadres “should use the spirit of the Tenth Plenum to become a major political motive to promote production, work, study, and to launch the ‘increase productivity while practicing economy’ campaign (*zengchan jieyue yundong*) in industrial enterprises.”⁵² While leading people through the communiqué’s references to “supporting Cuba” or the “Sino-Indian border issue,” “begin to initiate” the ‘increase productivity while practicing economy’ and ‘work competition’ (*laodong jingsai*) campaigns. Once officials can forge this conceptual connection for people, between events abroad and the relevance to their work at home, the directive explained,

as [people] continue to take a step forward in their study, and unceasingly raise their understanding, as the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses is gradually set off in the course of their study, [these motives] will change so that current production is considered a concrete act [to events abroad].⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid., 4.

⁵² Ibid., 5.

⁵³ Ibid., 5.

Indeed, this is precisely how *domestic internationalism* was designed to function, and the Tenth Plenum would usher in a revamped version of this strategy, tightening like never before the imagined link between the world and China.

Reports of how these Tenth Plenum study sessions were carried out offer a window into what this revamped *domestic internationalism* would be like. At Shanghai's Preservation and Transportation Company, officials went to great lengths to emphasize how the wider world was "in the midst of a wave that is even more favorable to the people of all countries."⁵⁴ As part of this wave, opposition to the neo-colonial policies of U.S. imperialism and its allies was "continually rising." So too were China's "friends," among them the "world's oppressed nationalities" steadily gaining independence across the Third World. Indeed, China's "standing and prestige on the international stage" were said to be climbing daily, as the PRC's "policies...have received the support and sympathy of all peace-loving peoples around the world." There was reason to be hopeful and to forge ahead with China's socialist enterprise at home, these sessions argued, particularly given its vast global resonance.

One Shanghai-based trade company even went so far as to issue a test to its employees upon completion of their sustained study of the Tenth Plenum communiqué. In the true/false section beginning the quiz, it asked,

The international situation is right now in the process of turning in a direction much more favorable to the world's people. All the world's people oppose the American imperialist policies of war and invasion, and the struggle against neo-colonialism is right now continuing to increase. True or false?⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Chuyun Gongsì Dangwei Xuanchuanbu [Preservation and Transportation Company Propaganda Department], "Guanyu xuexi he xuanchuan dangde bajie shizhong quanhui jueyi de yijian [Regarding Views on Studying and Propagandizing the Tenth Plenum Resolution]," November 6, 1962, SMA, B123-5-623, 43.

⁵⁵ Shanghaishi Maoyi Xintuo Gongsì Zongzhi Bangongshi [Shanghai Trade Company General Branch Office], "Shishi ceyan - Dangde bajie shizhong quanhui gongbao neirong [Current Affairs Quiz - Content from the Party's Tenth Plenum Communiqué]," October 1962, SMA, B123-5-623, 161.

Next, a fill-in-the-blank portion led students to acknowledge – and indeed assert for themselves – the unity forming between all “peace-loving” peoples in opposition to U.S. imperialism, and the righteousness of the struggles for freedom across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Finally, the assignment concluded with a short answer question regarding the Tenth Plenum’s assessment of the correctness of the CCP’s general line in foreign policy. As this company’s test makes clear, if a revamped *domestic internationalism* was going to fulfill its task in China’s 1960s, a Chinese audience would not only need to study the Tenth Plenum’s conceptual innovations but also internalize these ideas for themselves.

In discursively and conceptually linking China’s international and domestic realms through the language of a shared struggle, the Tenth Plenum paved the way for a different version of *domestic internationalism* to be called into action over the ensuing years. In the face of comprehensive crisis and the Party’s threatened legitimacy, Mao was determined to rise from the ashes of his Great Leap calamity and save China’s socialist enterprise from sure future ruin. He would do this by turning to the people and the mechanism he trusted most: mass mobilization through political campaign. A series of such campaigns would rectify the elements within the Party and society which sought to pull China away from its destiny of a socialist modernity.

As it had before, *domestic internationalism* would serve a crucial instrument in securing the mass mobilization upon which these campaigns were based. But 1962 was a unique kind of crisis requiring a unique discourse of Chinese internationalism. Only after the conceptual groundwork had been laid at the Tenth Plenum could this revamped *domestic internationalism* be unveiled and unleashed. Through its arguments, themes, tactics, and myriad mediums, this

internationalist propaganda told of a China on the rise, a world turning in its favor, and thus the global stakes of completing the PRC's socialist revolution. This revamped story of the world and China's place within it would go a long way toward stemming the tide of China's comprehensive crisis, winning back popular hearts and minds along the way.

Domestic Internationalism Revamped

Following the Tenth Plenum, *domestic internationalism* appeared markedly different than its previous incarnations both in content and in practice. It would summon a host of previously subdued arguments about the world, establish fresh themes and contexts for Chinese audiences to interpret international events, draw upon a wealth of strategic tactics to help its ideas resonate, and roll out an extensive array of mediums to allow these narratives to penetrate deep into everyday PRC life. From the Tenth Plenum until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution midway through 1966, the world would be brought to PRC citizens as never before.

At the heart of the CCP's revamped strategy of *domestic internationalism* was an argument about the world. It was a story about a world changing, finally turning in the direction of the world's oppressed and progressive peoples. All across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, people were emerging out from under the boot of western colonialism. They were keen to exercise their independence and follow their own given right to pursue the promise of modernity. Even under oppressive regimes in the capitalist west or the revisionist eastern bloc, people everywhere were clamoring for freedom, for dignity, and for respect. Championing themes of Third World revolution, race, decolonization, postcolonial development, and modernization, this narrative promised of a future in which history would now right the wrongs of the past.

This was an argument forged before China's 1960s. Indeed, these ideas grew out of the earlier 'Bandung spirit,' under which China was both a revolutionary *and* a postcolonial nation. Only now, however, had circumstance rendered it viable for coming to the forefront of the Party's strategic deployment of internationalism at home.⁵⁶ The comprehensive crisis of the early 1960s combined with Beijing's newfound freedom to depart liberally from the socialist line, meant this argument could finally come to the fore. For this reason, the CCP's revamped *domestic internationalism* in the 1960s ought to be viewed less as a reactive product of the Sino-Soviet split, and more as the unencumbered flourishing of long-standing ideas previously subdued in deference to an ally; China's ideas about the pursuit of postcolonial modernity were not new in the 1960s, they were simply moved to center stage.⁵⁷

Once under the spotlight, the Party's argument about the world was worked out through stimulating and enthralling tales, summoning a host of fresh and largely new characters. While stories of revolutionary successes in Cuba and Algeria continued into the early 1960s, second wave decolonization across Africa brought that continent much more actively into Chinese propaganda as the decade progressed. So too, the steadily escalating conflict in Vietnam – long since on the PRC popular radar, but now to be deeply integrated into everyday Chinese life.

Domestic internationalism would also gain a new and important character following each time Mao himself publicly weighed in on international affairs, as he did regarding events in Panama, the Congo, and the Dominican Republic. The Chairman's 1963 verdict on the African-

⁵⁶ Chen, "Bridging Revolution and Decolonization," 214.

⁵⁷ Here, I depart from the interpretation of Zachary Scarlett in his treatment of what he terms "global narratives" in China's 1960s. For Scarlett, these narratives were essential tools in the CCP's effort to develop "new categories" of the world that emerged principally due to the PRC's break with the Soviet Union. Though, to be sure, the Sino-Soviet split did complicate China's navigation of its foreign relations and, as I argue, contribute to its comprehensive crisis in the early 1960s, I do not read *domestic internationalism* in the 1960s as drawing upon wholly new themes nor new categories of the world. It is precisely because its themes *already* held purchase with Chinese audiences *before* the 1960s, I argue, that these tales of the wider world (and China's place within it) resonated so effectively. See Scarlett, "China After the Sino-Soviet Split," 17.

American Civil Rights Movement would also entrench that cause within Chinese domestic propaganda, offering it an important link between race and revolution which would be further explored in most (if not all) the Third World struggles it extolled. Through race, the Party could attack western colonialism and American imperialism on moral and ethical grounds in addition to its ever-present critiques based on ideology and Marxist economics.

The power of *domestic internationalism*'s central argument about the world and the themes it used to make that case depended too on the context the strategy painted. The world was tilting in the direction of the world's revolutionary peoples, and those people were looking toward Beijing as their postcolonial model. As a non-white victim of western colonialism itself, China had risen from these ashes to build a strong, modern, sovereign nation with an agricultural bounty and advanced industrial capacity. The PRC, this context established, was both the center of world revolution and a postcolonial success story. Beijing offered hope to the progressive people of the world, and the future was theirs.

But the context this propaganda stressed was also fraught with danger. International enemies (like domestic ones) lurked around every corner and were bent on destroying the revolutionary peoples' advance toward modernity. By establishing a war-like atmosphere threatening the PRC's international and domestic spheres alike, the CCP could stimulate a sense of urgency and help destroy a 'numbness by peace' (*heping mabi*), which they saw as pervasive amongst the Chinese people.⁵⁸ Indeed, as one training report highlighted, owing to things like the people's overconfidence in the PRC's ultimate victory over its foreign enemies or feelings of

⁵⁸ For a sustained look at how threat inflation, fear and war paranoia were manipulated by American politicians for domestic political gain during the Cold War era, see Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*. See too Dudziak, *Wartime*.

distance from faraway battlefields, the Chinese masses were at times slack in their vigilance.⁵⁹

For *domestic internationalism* to fully resonate as a mobilizing tool, therefore, it was necessary to strike a balance between a context that was at once frightening yet hopefully optimistic.

Few events contributed to this context better than the very real war scare the PRC experienced after U.S. intervention in Vietnam escalated dramatically in early 1965. Though the threat of the war spilling into the PRC was very real during this period, Chinese internationalist propaganda was sure to communicate and even exaggerate the threat to secure its full mobilizational effect. One Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department directive on how to use events in Vietnam to serve domestic ends, spelled out how this mechanism worked very clearly. After describing to audiences the tense situation in Vietnam, officials should capitalize on this context by encouraging people to support Vietnam: by boosting their production in industry, mining, and agriculture, by studying hard the works of Chairman Mao, by strengthening national defense through developments in science and technology, by “preventing the destructive schemes of bad people” at home, and by participating actively in the Four Clean-ups campaign to help “carry out to the end the socialist revolution.”⁶⁰ Be confident but vigilant, this context suggested, pouring oneself into China’s domestic revolution to make a global contribution.

If the confident anxiety of this context helped a revamped *domestic internationalism* to thrive, so too did a handful of linguistic and conceptual deployment tactics accompanying these stories of the wider world. Some such devices were not directly internationalist in nature, but

⁵⁹ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuan Bangongshi [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Sixiang Dongxiang, 61 - Zai shidian danwei qunzhongzhong jinxing beizhan xuanchuanhou de sixiang fanying [Ideological Trends, 61 - Ideological Reactions Following Attempts to Engage in War Preparation Propaganda in Mass Work Units],” July 16, 1965, SMA, A22-2-1276, 120.

⁶⁰ Zhonggong Shaanxi Shengwei Xuanchuanbu [Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department], “Zhiyuan Yuenan renmin kangMei jiuguo douzheng de xuanchuan cankao cailiao [Propaganda Reference Materials for Supporting the Vietnamese People’s Anti-American Struggle to Save the Nation],” April 29, 1965, Shaanxi Provincial Archives, Xi’an, Shaanxi, The People’s Republic of China [hereafter: SXPA], 196-1-254, 98-99.

lent themselves well to valorizing and romanticizing revolution at home and abroad. Promotion of the Chinese military helped to foster a wartime atmosphere, for example, as did the hero worship of young virtuous soldiers like Lei Feng, Wang Jie, and even the Vietnamese guerilla martyr Nguyen Van Troi (Ruan Wenzhui in Chinese).

Internationalist propaganda was also sometimes deployed in ways encouraging Chinese audiences to ‘recall the past to contrast it with the present’ (*huiyi duibi*) or use ‘past bitterness to celebrate present accomplishments’ (*yiku sitian*). The goal here was to encourage Chinese viewers and listeners to view ongoing struggles abroad through the lens of China’s own historical and revolutionary experience. If one was viewing haunting images of western colonialism in African settings, for example, or tortured struggles for independence there, they should recognize the similarity with China’s own arduous path through semi-coloniality, keeping in mind its journey to present success, and therein discovering why exactly the PRC was such an inspiration to revolutionaries and postcolonial peoples the globe over.

Other deployment tactics were more overtly internationalist, though no less bent on appealing to a pervasive and nationalistic Sinocentrism. The ‘three emulates, three thinks’ (*sanbi sanxiang*) approach advocated by Shanghai propagandists, for example, asked audiences to consider the war unfolding in Vietnam by thinking about: (1) where today’s rich and plentiful life came from; (2) how in the past China was oppressed by the invasion of Japanese imperialism; (3) how right now U.S. imperialism ruthlessly massacres the people of Vietnam.⁶¹ It then asked them to emulate: (1) the spirit of blood sacrifice of China’s revolutionary martyrs; (2) the revolutionary contributions of the mothers and young women of the Chinese revolution; (3) the revolutionary spirit of the Vietnamese people bravely repelling the U.S. and its puppet clique.

⁶¹ Jing’anqu Wanlong Jiedao Dangwei [Jing’an District Wanhong Neighborhood Party Committee], “Women zenyang dui junshu jinxing xingshi jiaoyu [How We Engage in Situational Education in Military Units],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 144.

A similar tactic, called the ‘three unforgettables’ (*sange buyao wanji*), also sought to forge a conceptual bridge between China’s past experiences and the revolutionary world’s current causes. Audiences must never forget: (1) China’s own past; (2) that everywhere imperialism exists there will also be war, and especially so as U.S. imperialism continues to engage in war provocations; (3) that two-thirds of the world’s people have yet to be liberated.⁶² This last point in particular permitted Party propagandists to link China’s experience with those of all oppressed peoples across the Third World, and even African-Americans as well. Popular periodicals would do precisely this. The CCP circular *Party Branch Life* (*Zhibu Shenghuo*) commenced in late 1962 a regular photo spread entitled ‘life under an exploitative system’ (*zai boxue zhidu xia*), where contemporary shots capturing the horrors of places like South Africa, Brazil, and Portuguese colonies in Africa would sit alongside images of Shanghai and Hong Kong from the 19th and early 20th century heydays of western intrusion.⁶³ No country or people, these images and similar tactics insisted, understood better the ongoing plight of oppressed peoples than did the PRC and the Chinese people. For that reason alone, citizens of the PRC must strive to continue to complete China’s advance to socialist modernity, so they might shine even brighter as the world’s beacon.

One of the most critical innovations to *domestic internationalism* in China’s 1960s was undoubtedly its multi-pronged attack.⁶⁴ From 1962 into the early Cultural Revolution, internationalist propaganda was brought to Chinese audiences across a vast collection of mediums, drawing on the artistic and the mundane alike. Posters, magazines, and books

⁶² Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui Shanghaishi Fenhui Bangongshi [Foreign Cultures Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “‘Meiguo qinlüezhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu’ tupian zhanlanhui zhanchu qingkuang jianbao (1) [Briefing on Staging the ‘American Invaders Get Out of Vietnam’ Photo Exhibition (1)],” May 8, 1965, SMA, C37-2-139, 4.

⁶³ See, for example, *Zhibu Shenghuo* [*Party Branch Life*], 1962 (nos. 23, 24), 1963 (nos. 1-4), 1964, (nos. 15, 17, 23).

⁶⁴ This metaphor was actually one the Party itself used regularly, oftentimes referring to its various propaganda mediums as “weapons” (*wuqi*).

continued to capture events from around the world, but so too would more creative forms including poems, comic books, and even ‘foreign friends’ visiting with greater frequency to corroborate the Party’s take on the globe. As subsequent chapters will chronicle in detail, the world also came to the Chinese public through mass internationalist events, documentary films, photo exhibitions, songs, musicals, and other varieties of dramatic stage plays. As CCP propagandists shrewdly calculated, if *domestic internationalism* was going to reach its full potential in securing mass mobilization for the ongoing political campaigns, it needed to be fashioned in entertaining forms captivating the eyes and ears of people all across the country – rural and urban, learned and uneducated alike.

But, the strategy’s weapons were more still. ‘Living newspaper plays’ (*huobaoju*) brought global news stories to life in often swiftly prepared amateur skits. ‘Chalkboard newspapers’ (*heibanbao*) and ‘wall newspapers’ (*qiangbao*) ensured that no one would miss the international events of that day’s news. Banners bearing internationalist causes and slogans likewise adorned cities and villages during these years. A collection of banners mandated by Beijing, for example, to be positioned around major cities throughout 1966, implored readers to unite with the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to support Vietnam, and to implement the Cultural Revolution, amongst other directives.⁶⁵

In addition to mass holiday celebrations and Party-organized protest rallies, collective internationalist events were a regular occurrence. Speeches and discussion forums would be arranged with Chinese soldiers who had participated in the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, and even Vietnamese guerilla fighters recuperating in Chinese hospitals and thereafter touring the

⁶⁵ Zhonggong Shangluo Diwei Bangongshi [Central Shangluo Prefectural Party Committee Office], “Chengxia qiangtou biaoyu [City and Countryside Wall Banners],” October 8, 1966, SXPA, 123-3-1135, 50-51.

PRC to pass along their war stories.⁶⁶ In other cases, local-level sports competitions would be organized around themes including the war in Vietnam and encouraging physical training to prepare for possible war.⁶⁷ Similarly, the Party would assemble ‘military camping’ activities

⁶⁶ See, for example, Gongqingtuan Beijing Shiwei [Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee], “Zhong-Yin bianjing ziwei fanji zuozhan yingxiong mofan shiji baogaohui [Public Lecture on the Achievements of War Heroes from the Counterattack on the Sino-Indian Frontier],” January 6, 1964, Beijing Municipal Archives, Beijing, The People’s Republic of China [hereafter: BMA], 100-001-00880, Shaanxisheng Junqu Zhengzhibu [Shaanxi Provincial Military Region Political Department], “Jiedai Yinjun zhanfu jihua [Plan for Receiving Indian Military Prisoners of War]” and “Jiedai Yinjun zhanfu gongzuo jianbao [Work Briefing on Receiving Indian Military Prisoners of War],” March 31-April 4, 1963, SXPA, 196-1-163, 161-167, and Gongqingtuan Shanghai Shiwei Waibin Jiedai Bangongshi [Communist Youth League Shanghai Municipal Committee Office for Receiving Foreign Guests], “Yaliao Yuenan Xiuyangyuan zai Hu huodong qingkuang [Circumstances of Activities in Shanghai of North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital],” August 31, 1964 – September 4, 1964, SMA, C21-2-2377, Gongqingtuan Shanghai Shiwei Waibin Jiedai Bangongshi [Communist Youth League Shanghai Municipal Committee Office for Receiving Foreign Guests], “Jiedai Ya-Fei xuesheng liaoyangyuan Chaoxian, Yuenan xiuyangyuan de jihua [Plan for Receiving North Korean and North Vietnamese Convalescents from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital],” March 10, 1965 and “Ya-Fei xuesheng liaoyangyuan Chaoxian, Yuenan xiuyangyuan zai Hu huodong qingkuang jianbao [Briefing on the Activities in Shanghai of North Korean and North Vietnamese Convalescents from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital],” March 21, 1965 and “Ya-Fei xuesheng liaoyangyuan Chaoxian, Yuenan xiuyangyuan zai Hu huodong qingkuang jianbao (2) [Briefing on the Activities in Shanghai of North Korean and North Vietnamese Convalescents from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital (2)],” March 30, 1965 and “Xiang Chaoxian waibin jieshao tuande zhengzhi sixiang gongzuo cujin qingnian geminghua wenti de huibao [Report on Introducing North Korean Guests to the Political Thought Work of the Communist Youth League and Encouraging the Revolutionizing of the Youth],” April 1965, C21-2-2585, Gongqingtuan Shanghai Shiwei Waibin Jiedai Bangongshi [Communist Youth League Shanghai Municipal Committee Office for Receiving Foreign Guests], “Yuenan nanfang bingren zai Hu huodong qingkuang huibao (3) [Report on the Activities of a Southern Vietnamese Patient in Shanghai (3)],” November 4, 1965 and “Yuenan nanfang bingren zai Hu huodong qingkuang huibao (4) [Report on the Activities in Shanghai of a Southern Vietnamese Patient (4)],” November 6, 1965, C21-2-2659, Gongqingtuan Shanghai Shiwei Waibin Jiedai Bangongshi [Communist Youth League Shanghai Municipal Committee Office for Receiving Foreign Guests], “Jiedai Ya-Fei xuesheng liaoyangyuan Yuenan xiuyangyuan de jihua [Plan for Receiving a North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital],” November 11, 1965 and “Yaliao Yuenan xiuyangyuan zai Hu huodong qingkuang huibao (1) [Report on the Activities in Shanghai of a North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital (1)],” November 17, 1965 and “Yaliao Yuenan xiuyangyuan zai Hu huodong qingkuang huibao (2) [Report on the Activities in Shanghai of a North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital (2)],” November 18, 1965, C21-2-2661, Gongqingtuan Shanghai Shiwei Waibin Jiedai Bangongshi [Communist Youth League Shanghai Municipal Committee Office for Receiving Foreign Guests], “Ya-Fei xuesheng liaoyangyuan Yuenan xiuyangyuan zai Hu huodong qingkuang huibao (1) [Report on the Activities in Shanghai of a North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital (1)],” June 27, 1966 and “Ya-Fei xuesheng liaoyangyuan Yuenan xiuyangyuan zai Hu huodong qingkuang huibao (2) [Report on the Activities in Shanghai of a North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital (2)],” July 4, 1966, C21-2-2849, Gongqingtuan Shanghai Shiwei Waibin Jiedai Bangongshi [Communist Youth League Shanghai Municipal Committee Office for Receiving Foreign Guests], “[Report on the Activities in Shanghai of a North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital (1)],” November 9, 1966 and “Report on the Activities in Shanghai of a North Vietnamese Convalescent from the Afro-Asian Student Convalescent Hospital (2),” November 11, 1966, C21-2-2852.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Gongqingtuan Beijingshi Weiyuanhui [Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee] et al., “Guanyu jiaqiang lingdao jianchi kaizhan dongji tiyu duanlian de lianhe tongzhi [Joint Notification Regarding Strengthening the Leadership’s Insistence on Initiating Winter Athletic Exercises],”

(*junshi yeying huodong*) for elementary and middle school students during their summer holiday, helping them better appreciate the wartime struggles of their embattled counterparts abroad.

Indeed, a significant amount of internationalist propaganda and mediums targeted Chinese children. As the future of the revolution and too young to have witnessed firsthand the revolutionary glories experienced by their parent's generation, the Party knew it was imperative that *domestic internationalism* help to shape their early interpretations of the world, corralling their political allegiance in the process. Cartoons, comics, and short stories drawing on non-complex Chinese *Hanzi* characters (and regularly including *pinyin* phonetic guides), all aimed to appeal to children, often featuring young child heroes playing prominent roles in internationalist struggles.⁶⁸ Toys and board games were fashioned too. One version of the latter, premised on the Vietnamese guerilla fight, guided players through underground tunnels while planting booby-traps for unsuspecting American soldiers.⁶⁹

The school, of course, offered the central venue through which these children could be reached, and their lesson materials too thus became ripe for internationalist infusion. Math equations were particularly malleable, and gave way to questions drawing upon numbers of Third World guerilla fighters, Palestinian kill rates of Israeli soldiers, and percentages of U.S.

October 28, 1965 and Gongqingtuan Beijing Shiwei [Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee], "Guanyu jiaqiang zhongxiao xuexiao guofang tiyu gongzuo wenti de tongzhi [Notice Regarding the Issue of Strengthening Primary and Middle School Work on National Defense Exercises]," June 8, 1965, BMA, 100-001-00951, 32, 40, and Hubeisheng Wenhuaaju [Hubei Provincial Bureau of Culture] et al., "Guanyu juban shuqi xuesheng dianying zhuanchang de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding Summer Holiday Student Film Special Screenings]," July 20, 1965 and Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhuaabu [Central Department of Culture], "Guanyu juban shuqi xuesheng dianying zhuanchang de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding Summer Holiday Student Film Special Screenings]," June 23, 1965, Hubei Provincial Archives, Wuhan, Hubei, The People's Republic of China [hereafter: HPA], SZ27-2-238. For an extensive look at the intersection between sports, foreign relations, and domestic mobilization in the PRC, see Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletics."

⁶⁸ See, for example, *xiao-Bei he xiao-Li* [*Little Bei and Little Li*], (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe [Shanghai People's Press], 1965), *Shengli* [*Victory*], (Beijing: Zhongguo shaonian ertong chubanshe [Chinese Children's Press], 1964), and *Yuenan ertong xiaoshuoxuan* [*A Collection of Vietnamese Children's Stories*], (Shanghai: Shaonian ertong chubanshe [Children's Press], 1965).

⁶⁹ "Ba Meidi maizang zai renmin zhanzheng de wangyang dahai zhizhong [Bury the American Imperialists in the Boundless Ocean of the People's War]," Children's board game, publisher unknown, date unknown, Stefan Landberger Collection.

cities overrun by African-American protests for racial equality.⁷⁰ One self-referential equation placing PRC children on the frontlines of world revolution read,

Following Chairman Mao's statement in support of the African-American struggle against tyranny, 17 platoons of eternally red, revolutionary elementary school students and teachers immediately engaged in protest demonstrations and resolutely endorsed Chairman Mao's mighty statement. On average, each platoon had 45 people. Altogether, how many people participated in protest?⁷¹

Though young people were only one segment of the vast Chinese population *domestic internationalism* targeted, imbuing these youngsters with a sense of their own importance well beyond the PRC's borders would be fundamental to stirring them into action as Red Guards in the early Cultural Revolution.

For young people and their elders alike, political training sessions were often a concentrated opportunity for Party propagandists to bring to bear its myriad tools of *domestic internationalism*. Typically premised on one of a variety of specializations, these small-group sessions offer a window into the richness and deployment of these many propaganda forms. The training groups most commonly summoning these narratives of the world were those focused on 'situational education' (*xingshi jiaoyu*) or 'current events education' (*shishi jiaoyu*). These sessions would introduce people to particular events and themes about the wider world, offer them descriptions and depictions of these happenings, and then connect these tales to the work these people were themselves conducting in the PRC.

Shanghai propaganda officials were particularly adept at these training sessions. In one factory there, Party propagandists would run discussion groups, screen films, and help lead attendees in chanting slogans. Their key, one debriefing report spells out, was to "target the political thought circumstances of the masses" and use ongoing events abroad as a "hook upon

⁷⁰ See *Suanshu [Arithmetic]*, (Beijing: Beijingshi xiaoxue shiyan keben [Beijing Municipal Elementary School Workbooks], 1969), vol. 5, 22, vol. 7, 16, and vol. 9, 73.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 20.

which people can hang their production and their work.”⁷² One work unit connected to the military hoped that ‘situational education’ training would “grab hold of [people’s] political ideology,” gradually deepening their education until they would be able to “self-educate” as they encountered new events occurring around the world.⁷³ To accomplish this, these training sessions engaged in “comprehensive propaganda,” drawing upon oral tutorials, discussion groups, debates, and film screenings, all the while emphasizing the ‘three emulates, three thinks’ strategy conjoining international events with China’s own historical path.

Propaganda officials in one Shanghai-based electric cable factory deployed a veritable gamut of internationalist propaganda, feeling that “diversified propaganda is both purposeful and effective.”⁷⁴ Elaborating on this point they explained their logic,

If you are able to use vivid and vigorous forms which draw upon what the masses love to see and hear, you can create a situation where they are constantly receiving ‘current affairs’ and ‘situational’ education in a number of different ways.

Accordingly, this particular factory’s training drew upon banners, slogans, poems, photo exhibitions, newspaper clippings, magazines, wall newspapers, singing events and competitions, radio broadcasts, films, plays, maps, and living newspaper plays. They even went so far as to craft their own propaganda poster, entitled “Chinese and Vietnamese Electric Cable Workers Fight Shoulder-to-Shoulder!” Right down to specific trades – electric cable manufacturers, in this case – everyone had their very own role to play on the frontlines of world revolution.

⁷² Shanggang Erchang Zhengzhibu [Shanghai Number Two Steel Factory Political Department], “Xingshijiaoyu Cujinle shengchan tuidongle gongzuo [Situational Education Spurs Production and Encourages Work],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 76.

⁷³ Jing’anqu Wanlong Jiedao Dangwei [Jing’an District Wanhong Neighborhood Party Committee], “Women zenyang dui junshu jinxing xingshijiaoyu [How We Engage in Situational Education in Military Units],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 143.

⁷⁴ Zhonggong Shanghai Dianlanchang Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Electric Cable Factory Propaganda Department], “Yunyong duozhong duoyang xuanchuan fangshi xiang zhigong jinxing shishi jiaoyu [Use All Kinds of Propaganda Forms to Engage Workers in Current Affairs Education],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 262.

Officials were pleased with their results, and felt this diversified propaganda helped to “combat formalism,” whereby people begin to simply “go through the motions” with their political thought consciousness.⁷⁵ In one example, they noted how upon listening to a radio broadcast about Mao Zedong’s May 1965 statement on events in the Dominican Republic, workers were puzzled as to where this place was in the world. Immediately, a propaganda officer swooped in drawing a map on the chalkboard, whereupon the workers were stunned at how close it was to the U.S. They then collectively agreed that they must support more actively “those brave enough to wage revolution at the U.S.’s backdoor.”⁷⁶

Similar sentiments were achieved in ‘situational education’ training conducted in one of the Shanghai city government’s tax bureaus. There, one 32-year old worker whose political consciousness was initially “not high,” gradually gained a firm appreciation for events unfolding in Vietnam.⁷⁷ Whereas he once felt that war was distant and unrelated to the PRC, he now realized the significance of the fight there for China and beyond. Indeed, these training sessions served such an important function to a revamped *domestic internationalism* that even those within the production of this propaganda had first to be trained. Accordingly, a Shanghai drama troupe underwent extensive ‘current events education’ before staging the play *Letters from the South* about the southern Vietnamese guerilla struggle.⁷⁸

Vietnam-specific training also moved beyond ‘situation’ and ‘current events’ education, and implicated what officials referred to as ‘war preparation propaganda’ (*beizhan xuanchuan*).

These sessions sought to drive home the context of an international realm favorable to world

⁷⁵ Ibid., 264.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 265.

⁷⁷ “Yige shuiwu ganbu zai xingshi jiaoyu zhong de sixiang bianhua [The Ideological Changes of a Tax Administration Cadre Receiving Situational Education],” June 1965, SMA, A22-2-1287, 109-116.

⁷⁸ See Zhonggong Shanghai Renmin Yishu Juyuan Huaju Yituan Zhibu Weiyuanhui [Shanghai People’s Artistic Theatre Number One Dialogue Drama Party Branch Committee], “Genju wenyi danwei tedian, jinxing shishi xuexi [Engaging in Current Affairs Study According to the Special Characteristics of Artistic Work Units],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 96-101.

revolutionaries, but not without its share of threats. Accordingly, one had to maintain vigilance, prepare for possible war, and pour themselves into their work for the sake of the cause. In a report on their progress with this tactic, Shanghai officials identified that war unpreparedness stemmed from problems of fear of harm, ‘numbness by peace,’ and overconfidence. In some cases, they found, people continued to be haunted by recent hardships wrought by the Great Leap Forward, and thus feared what war might do their house, money, livestock, and even PRC currency values.⁷⁹ Drawing on internationalist films, stories, posters, and photo exhibitions, however, officials were able to negate these concerns and instill a sense of confidence amongst attendees. Weapons were no match for the “human will,” this training promised, and “revolutionary war is the head of the train pushing history forward.” Once the group internalized these ideas, they felt better about meeting war head-on and preparing for it through their work.

Finally, Shanghai propaganda officials were keen for work units to arrange ‘newspaper reading groups’ (*dubaozu*), encouraging workers to follow current events and then grapple with them in a collective setting. In one such group in a neighborhood in the city’s Puta district, residents read together about the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, and were led to interpret these events through the lens of recalling their own past hardships. With several members of the 30-person group either fully illiterate or only half-literate, reading articles aloud and emphasizing discussion was paramount. Older members of the group were asked to verbalize their personal memories of the Japanese invasion of China and of the post-liberation joint U.S.-Guomindang bombing of Shanghai. This, officials spelled out, would help residents to “raise their vigilance,” prepare their “political thinking along the lines of resisting a U.S.-led invasion,” and push them

⁷⁹ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu Bangongshi [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Sixiang Dongxiang, 61 – Zai shidian danwei qunzhong zhong jinxing beizhan xuanchuan hou de sixiang fanying [Ideological Trends, 61 – Ideological Reactions Following Attempts to Engage in War Preparation Propaganda in Mass Work Units],” July 16, 1965, SMA, A22-2-1276, 121.

to “make a concrete contribution to support Vietnam and resist America.”⁸⁰ By drawing upon relatable Chinese experiences, group members could better understand the imperativeness of “using war to destroy war,” thereby working to transcend their fears on this front.

Another Puta neighborhood expressed similarly positive results with its newspaper reading groups. Officials there aimed to have the sessions appear as natural and organic outgrowths of the people themselves, and would thus try to intervene sparingly. If, for example, the group’s reader did not sufficiently know what “kinds” of countries Panama, the Congo, or the Dominican Republic were and thus could not adequately contextualize articles about these events, their report spelled out, only then would a political officer introduce these countries, their politics, and their geography.⁸¹

In one Shanghai factory consisting largely of female workers, officials were eager to use such groups to help cement newspaper reading as a part of workers’ daily routines, alongside radio broadcasts, film screenings, and discussion groups. Their planning was meticulous and officials went to great lengths to select their newspaper readers from amongst those who exhibited high political consciousness, were well respected by their peers, and had “clear pronunciation” in their speech.⁸² Following two years of running newspaper reading groups at the factory, officials felt the approach had helped “set off” workers’ “patriotism and internationalism,” and encouraged them to participate in the People’s Militia in the “spirit of

⁸⁰ Putaqu Putalu Guangmingcun Di Shijiu, Ershi Jumin Xiaozu Dubao Jingyan [Putu District Puta Street Guangming Village Numbers 19 and 20 Resident Small Groups Newspaper Reading Experiences], “Yindao jumin huiyi qinshen jingli lai tigao juexing shuli jiben guandian [Elicit Residents’ Past Recollections and Firsthand Experiences to Help Raise Their Consciousness and Establish Fundamental Points of View],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 126-132.

⁸¹ Putaqu Caoyang Yicun Liweihui [Putu District Caoyang Village Number One Neighborhood Committee], “Liangnian lai women shi zenyang jianchi jumin dubao de [How We Persisted in Leading Residents to Read Newspapers Over the Past Two Years],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 243-244.

⁸² Zhonggong Guoying Shanghai Disan Maofang Zhichang Weiyuanhui [Number 3 State-Owned Shanghai Wool and Textile Factory Committee], “Guoying Shanghai disan maofang zhichang dubao gongzuo de qingkuang [The Circumstances of Newspaper Reading Work at the Number 3 State-Owned Shanghai Wool and Textile Factory],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 206-207.

‘everyone a soldier.’”⁸³ The collective reading of newspapers, like other political training sessions, not only guided Chinese audiences through the Party’s revamped argument about the world, but it also led them to carve out their own role within the larger realm of ongoing global developments. The people of the PRC, they were told, were uniquely positioned to perform local acts that carried a global effect, and each person had a contribution to make.

A revamped *domestic internationalism* would bring with it too a handful of new phrasings and discourses that would firmly take root throughout the decade. It was not uncommon, in China’s 1960s, for people to affirm, “internationally and domestically, the situation is excellent” (*guoneiwai dahaoxingshi*) or “our friends are spread all under heaven” (*women de pengyou bian tianxia*). But perhaps no phrase captured a redesigned *domestic internationalism* better than the widely uttered: “With the homeland in our hearts, our eyes are on the world” (*xionghuai zuguo, yankan shijie*). While variations would depict thinking about the wider world whilst “standing in the field” or “working in the factory,” the sentiment and its conceptual core did not change – events around the world drew strength from China, the Chinese revolution carried global import, the Chinese revolution must thus forge ahead. The world was changing, but China was well positioned to greet it. This must not, however, be taken for granted. Now more than ever one should ‘keep the homeland in their heart, their eyes on the world,’ redoubling their efforts to vault China and the world into its rightful postcolonial, socialist modernity.

Conclusion

⁸³ Ibid., 210-212.

By late 1962, *domestic internationalism* was poised to play the role for which it had been designed: use global events and internationalist themes as tools to help secure popular mobilization for domestic political ends. Unlike its previous incarnations, however, the challenge presented by the comprehensive crisis facing the PRC and the CCP itself was unlike anything the strategy had confronted before. The Great Leap Forward's descent into nationwide famine had tarnished the Party's legitimacy and sparked infighting amongst its leadership. Internationally, China was isolated and embattled, bereft of many friends and unaware how its foray into the burgeoning Third World would be received. Uncertain times called for fresh measures, and *domestic internationalism* would need to be revamped, most prominently bringing to the fore themes long on the Party's backburner.

While these ideas of Third World revolution, race, decolonization, postcolonial development, and modernization were not new to either the Party or the Chinese people, and had been in the PRC collective consciousness since before the emergence of a 'Bandung discourse,' they would now be trumpeted. Beijing's break from Moscow did not give birth to these ideas, nor were they created out of the CCP's reaction to the Sino-Soviet split. Indeed, these themes were not fundamentally about the Soviets, they were about China. What the Sino-Soviet rift did do was free CCP leaders from the shackles of socialist solidarity, allowing it full range to embrace its long-held self-identification of the PRC as a postcolonial success story, rising from the ashes of racist western oppression to greet its global destiny and guide others in its mold.

Alongside this revamped and assertive argument about the world and China's place within it, was a thorough overhaul of its application and practice. New contexts would be summoned, emphasizing at once a world turning in the direction of its revolutionary peoples with China as its model, but also fraught with the ever-present danger of war and enemy

invasion. Fresh tactics would help encourage Chinese audiences to see in the present world China's historical precedents, permitting them to feel confident about an emerging global order the PRC was uniquely positioned to greet. Political training sessions would work to cement these ideas, facilitating their trickle down effect, and helping secure the Party's intended effect of forging a collective conceptual link between local China and the wider world.

The revamped strategy of *domestic internationalism* that emerged in the PRC toward the end of 1962 would, in time, have a remarkable effect in indeed forging this link – first discursively, and then conceptually. In the years before the emergence of the Cultural Revolution midway through 1966, this strategy would unfurl its argument about the world and China's role within it through an extensive array of mediums. The ensuing chapters will examine many of these in close detail, exploring how they encouraged political participation through the mid-1960s, before tracing their effect on the mass mobilization and frenzied violence that so defined the early years of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, it is only by following this story through these oft-forgotten years of 1962-66 that we might better understand and begin to explain what happened during the Cultural Revolution's earliest days, when the dream of a world crafted in China's image ultimately gave way to the final gasps of its pursuit of a socialist modernity.

PART II:

DOMESTIC INTERNATIONALISM IN PRACTICE, 1962-66

Chapter 2: The World in the Chinese Streets:
Holidays, Rallies, Protests and Mass Chinese Internationalism, 1962-66

In 1965, as the leftist guerilla struggle in the Congo became one of the most prominent internationalist causes championed by the Chinese Communist Party, the state-run Xinhua News Agency published a small pamphlet dedicated to events transpiring there. It contained many of the familiar elements of the myriad other internationalist propaganda pamphlets churned out during China's 1960s: an official CCP statement on the issue at hand, a declaration on the situation by Mao Zedong himself, and reprinted editorials which had appeared in nationally-circulated newspapers like *People's Daily (Renmin Ribao)*. But this particular booklet contained a few other notable supplements as well, all of which corresponded with a number of Party-orchestrated mass rallies which had taken place across the People's Republic of China in the days after Mao's official statement on the Congo in November 1964. These included reprints of speeches at the main Beijing rally by top officials Peng Zhen and Guo Moruo, but also a nine-photo spread capturing the massive crowds at the rallies in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xi'an, and Kunming.

All too willing to interpret this information for its readers, an editor's note concludes the compendium, highlighting the precise numbers of the crowds gathered in Beijing and the eight million people said to have been "out on the streets" in protest all across the PRC.¹ "Denouncing the U.S. aggressors for their bloody crime and stretching out hands of friendship to their Congolese (L) brothers," the note positions the popular Chinese response as part of "a tremendous wave of opposition" arising "all over the world."² Defining the PRC demonstrations as an organic outgrowth of the Chinese people's will, the editors even attribute "the compilation

¹ See *In Support of the People of the Congo (Leopoldville) Against U.S. Aggression*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 25.

² Ibid.

and publication of this book” as “an expression of the Chinese people’s resolute support” for their Congolese counterparts.³

The Congo pamphlet, in many ways, bespeaks the power of the internationalist mass event in the CCP’s larger strategy of mobilization during this period. These mass gatherings saw the Party deliberately infuse into preexisting Chinese holidays and newly concocted public events alike, themes and messages which helped to cultivate ideas of a surging community of world revolutionaries and an imagined solidarity between its constituent groups. On its surface, this strategy of mass internationalism appears simple – gather a vast audience, disseminate one’s message about the wider world, hope that it encourages people to think beyond the domestic scope. But, as the Congo pamphlet suggests, in both planning and practice mass internationalism was considerably more nuanced, and retained a power and persuasion that prevailed long after the festivities of these events had concluded and the streets were emptied.

As with all of the component parts to its strategy of *domestic internationalism*, the CCP was not about to leave popular resonance of its narrative of the world up to chance. Accordingly, Party propagandists crafted mass internationalism with great attention to detail: they drew upon traditional Chinese cultural elements; they facilitated crowds to suggest a palpable (but imagined) sense of community; they offered a shared physical space and shared words in the form of slogans; they called upon extensive media coverage of mass events, reaching those not in attendance and implying an organic simultaneity between crowds across the country; they deployed foreigners, whose words and mere presence corroborated the Party’s story about the world; they presented the appearance of a spontaneous popular Chinese response to events from around the world. The result was a calendar so packed with days commemorating

³ Ibid., 26.

global events and internationalist themes that the holiday merged with the everyday, and the world flowed seamlessly into China's domestic revolution.

This chapter looks at internationalist mass events in China's early-to-mid 1960s, including traditional Chinese and PRC holidays freshly infused with internationalist themes, as well as wholly invented mass gatherings premised on events from abroad. Though mass events in the PRC – some of which were in response to international happenings – had been a regular part of life there since the founding of the state in 1949, in the 1960s internationalist mass events increased dramatically in their scope and frequency. As the Party sought to instrumentalize the global landscape to serve its domestic needs of popular political engagement, mass events were deployed celebrating global happenings from Panama to Vietnam to the Dominican Republic. In so doing, this chapter argues, mass internationalism played a critical role in helping to foster a popular Chinese imagination of a vast global community bounded by solidarity, and the deep relevance of China's domestic revolution to the cause of this transnational family. This chapter will begin by exploring the inherent power within internationalist mass events as the Party constructed them. It will then look at how traditional Chinese and PRC holidays were infused with internationalist themes and content. This chapter then concludes by examining a wide swath of newly minted (but seemingly spontaneous) mass rallies and demonstrations pertaining to global events transpiring around the world.

The Power and Persuasion of Internationalist Mass Events

Mass events – including holiday celebrations, festivals, parades, rallies, demonstrations, and protests – had been a part of PRC life since the regime's inception in 1949. As Chang-tai Hung argues, festivals and state parades in particular formed a critical component of the young

PRC's new political culture from very early on in the 1950s.⁴ As such, they were a “complicated political text,” the intentions behind which were myriad: they forged a separation between the preexisting order and the future socialism promised; they legitimated the authority of the Party within the new regime; they displayed a variety of Chinese achievements under communism; they asserted the paramount role of Chairman Mao Zedong in the Chinese revolution; they demonstrated China's place in the socialist world.⁵

As the Great Leap Forward painted a stark divide between the halcyon days of the early PRC and a China confronted by comprehensive crisis in its domestic revolution and mounting international isolation, mass events in the 1960s would now need to be revamped and radicalized alongside the Party's other instruments of state propaganda. As a key component of this toolbox, mass events were ripe for being strategically internationalized in their thematic and topical content. While internationalism had (at times) colored the Party's intentions with mass events in the 1950s, its role as a mobilizing trope for these large-scale gatherings would now be conspicuously deepened and intensified. Not only would preexisting national holiday celebrations become infused with more sustained engagement with narratives about the wider world, but there would also emerge a flood of ostensibly spontaneous mass rallies and protest demonstrations waged in the name of a variety of global causes.

In his own analysis of internationalist mass events in China's 1960s, Zachary Scarlett reads them as an important part of the CCP's effort to emphasize categories of the world. Particularly in the wake of the Sino-Soviet split in the early part of the decade, Scarlett argues, mass events helped the Party to “map and order the world along Chinese political lines.”⁶ To be sure, there is no question, for example, that Vietnam occupied a uniquely dominant role in

⁴ Hung, *Mao's New World*, 257.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 106, 94.

⁶ Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split,” 17.

China's internationalist mass events during this period, and Albania enjoyed attention commensurate with its friendly relations with the PRC but disproportionate to its international weight, as Scarlett demonstrates.

In my view, however, these mass gatherings performed a function more overarching than merely categorizing the countries of the world as friend, foe, or somewhere in between. Instead, I see the infusion and invention of internationalist mass events in China's 1960s as part of the CCP's larger effort to advance an argument; an argument about a global community, about its pursuit of modernity, about its future, and about China's fundamental role in bringing those prospects to fruition. This argument was premised on an idea that superseded the Cold War divide *and* the Sino-Soviet split, because it predated both. It was an idea about modernity, sovereignty, justice, dignity, and – not insignificantly – about China's global destiny to return to a place of centrality in the world. While the specifics of the ongoing struggles in Vietnam, the Congo, Panama, and the Dominican Republic were important, the ideas advanced in (and by) mass PRC events commemorating these struggles were not only bigger than them, but they also resonated back to China's own domestic revolution at home.

Here, the practice of internationalist mass events lent themselves perfectly to the Party's strategy of *domestic internationalism*. Since national holiday celebrations, commemorative anniversary events, and cultural gatherings like Chinese New Year and the Gregorian New Year had historical antecedents in China, they were vessels ripe to be filled with globally inspired content. By merging tradition and internationalism, the Party could tap into a preexisting popular enthusiasm to slip in its ideas about the world. Since most of these events offered Chinese citizens a reprieve from their daily duties, these gatherings also promised a captivated – and often captive – audience. Indeed, the physical crowd of amassed attendees at these large-

scale events was critical. It offered a palpable feeling of being part of a movement, which then helped facilitate imagining oneself part of a larger, global community championing the very same cause. This imagining was made easier too by the regular presence of ‘foreign friends’ at such events, their participation, words and gestures effectively corroborating the Party’s arguments about the world.

If a shared physical space was important to transcending vast geographic distance, so too were shared words. Communal slogans, shouted in unison by the event’s massive crowds, gave each individual a role to play (a literal voice) within the larger community. Specialized groups including the Chinese Women’s Federation and the Chinese Committee to Safeguard World Peace were also granted important responsibilities in mass events, which helped their members to imagine themselves part of a transnational tide, history turning in their favor.

As these many attributes suggest, one of the strengths behind internationalist mass events as tools of propaganda lies with their innate ability to present the illusion of organic spontaneity. As Scarlett astutely observes, mass events were rarely spontaneous.⁷ Instead, they were meticulously planned and deftly manicured events, as local-level planning documents make clear. That did not stop the CCP from presenting and playing up the *perception* of these spectacles as naturally occurring, popular responses to events abroad. This was particularly the case with the one-off, specialized rallies and protests in response to events in Vietnam, the Congo, and parts of Latin America, discussed later in this chapter.

Attendant to the illusion of a spontaneous popular Chinese internationalism was the extensive state media coverage of mass events. Newspapers, magazines, and specialized pamphlets covered the festivities as they occurred, and continued to circulate for weeks thereafter. Often replete with reprints of speeches made at the events, this coverage also made

⁷ Ibid.

concerted efforts to describe the Chinese crowds attending these events as they transpired all across the country. Photo spreads were designed to capture the immense size of these crowds, and images of mass events from all across China were placed alongside one another to suggest a national portrait of a transnational phenomenon. Here, state media coverage of mass events helped to extend the reaches of the event's imagined community to those swaths of the Chinese population unable to attend a local version. In so doing, this coverage not only invited the entire country to share in an event only some of them could actually attend, but it also suggested a shared sense of time – a sense that everyone across the country, and around the globe, were united together at precisely the same moment for precisely the same reason.

In his expanded meditation on a concept of Walter Benjamin's, Benedict Anderson discusses how the newspaper itself embodies the idea of "homogenous, empty time," in which "simultaneity is... transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar."⁸ Owing to the "calendrical coincidence" offered by the newspaper's time and date stamp, whereby readers perceive the various events of that day to correspond with one another through time and across space, the imagined linkage the paper forges between these events itself helps readers to conceive of themselves as sharing the bonds of a community.⁹ This is exactly how PRC state media coverage of internationalist mass events helped forge a sense of solidarity between disparate Chinese readers, *and* between Chinese nationals and their imagined friends abroad.

Anderson also pinpoints the relationship between the newspaper and its marketplace offered by "print capitalism" as fundamental to these imagined conceptions of community. The "colossal scale" and "ephemeral popularity" promised by print capitalism – alive and well in

⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

Mao's China, its socialist ideology notwithstanding – made it possible for large swaths of people to “think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways.”¹⁰ Print capitalism thrived in Mao's China less because of the pull and competition of the market (which was, of course, tightly regulated). Instead, it was precisely because the state's monopoly on national media led it to rely heavily on the major media organs to disseminate its message the Party became quite adept at positioning the media to *appear* as if it was independent and unsolicited. The state-run Xinhua news agency and its national dailies including *People's Daily* and *PLA News (Jiefangjun Bao)*, as Scarlett's work demonstrates, were essential to the Party's effort to circulate ideas of internationalism during this period.¹¹

Reflecting on his own childhood experiences, the art historian Wu Hung recalls how extensive media coverage “proliferated after each [major holiday]” during the 1950s and 1960s.¹² “The predictable dominance” of mass event coverage, Wu writes, “became part of the holiday ritual and helped regulate the political lives of Chinese people.”¹³ Keen to see if his own face had appeared in the coverage as a young boy following the 1959 National Day festivities, Wu raced to his school library to inspect the new issue of *People's Pictorial (Renmin Huabao)*. Though he did not make the cut, Wu recalls “looking so hard that some pictures were permanently imprinted in my mind.”¹⁴ Beyond the major holidays of National Day (October 1) and International Worker's Day (May 1), both deeply infused with internationalist themes in the 1960s, state media coverage similarly regulated how Chinese readers perceived the explicitly internationalist mass events that popped up to celebrate struggles unfolding across the world. As this chapter will show, Chinese state media's complimentary role in promoting internationalist

¹⁰ Ibid., 36.

¹¹ See Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split.”

¹² Wu, *Remaking Beijing*, 98-99.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

mass events evinces an important iteration of its indispensable function in the larger strategy of *domestic internationalism* in China's 1960s.

In many ways, then, internationalist mass events capture a distilled version of the strategy of *domestic internationalism* the CCP was eager to replicate in everyday life during the 1960s – an imagined sense of broad community (across the PRC and beyond); an array of audio-visual forms to drive home its argument about the world; art and culture as instruments of internationalism; ‘foreign friends’ there to corroborate the Party’s claims about the world. While subsequent chapters will tease out each of these forms in detail, this chapter will focus mainly on the shared sense of space, time and purpose offered by mass internationalist events, and how these ideas helped embed internationalism in everyday Chinese life during this period.

Crafting Calendrical Comradeship: PRC Holidays and Infused Internationalism

There was no shortage of annually celebrated national holidays in Mao's China. This was, of course, no accident as mass holiday celebrations offered a perfect opportunity for the Party to communicate its ideas to a large, captivated, popular audience. National Day, the October 1st celebration of the founding of the People's Republic, and International Worker's Day, the transnational May 1st gathering dear to the hearts of leftists the world over, were by far the most elaborate of these annual mass events. Alongside other national holidays including International Children's Day (June 1st) and the Founding of the People's Liberation Army (August 1st), these mass events were elaborate festivals with daily schedules packed with speeches, parades, songs, slogans, and theatrical performances.

While Beijing was always home to the largest of these celebrations, other major urban centers and rural villages alike would host their own corresponding version. In larger cities,

events would be dispersed all across the city, striving to encompass everyone in the vicinity. Accordingly, most everyone was released from their daily work duties to participate in the festivities, and both National Day and Worker's Day offered all Chinese people an entire week's reprieve. Attesting to the importance of the Party's sustained access to a concentrated mass public offered by these events, planning documents for these gatherings often refer not merely to the day's event (*jieri*) but to the period (*qijian*) surrounding the holiday. As Wu Hung describes, "a ritual calendar further allows the people to manifest itself in bodily form before its leaders on a regular basis; these rites thus symbolically transfer power from the people to the leadership."¹⁵

Particularly in Beijing's enormous Tiananmen Square – designed precisely for facilitating these kinds of mass events – but also in similar public spaces across the country modeled on Tiananmen, crowds would amass during holiday celebrations.¹⁶ There, they would form, in Wu's words, "an imaginary collective sanctioned in the country's constitution as the source of power, the cornerstone of the state, the foundation of society and the creator of history."¹⁷ The very act of gathering together in celebration offered individual Chinese people the sense of being part of a larger community, in this case a national one. As these mass holiday events would become steadily infused with internationalist themes and content throughout the 1960s, however, the imagined boundaries of this community would expand, taking on a transnational dimension commensurate with the common struggle of the world's revolutionary people.

As the PRC began to emerge from the Great Leap Forward and the Party sought to rebuild its legitimacy with its popular constituency, the country's extensive National Day

¹⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹⁶ See also Hung, *Mao's New World*, Chapter 1.

¹⁷ Wu, *Remaking Beijing*, 85.

celebrations became a prime battleground for strategically injecting internationalism into domestic Chinese life. Indeed, Wu describes the National Day parades following the Great Leap as re-designed to emphasize “a bright progressive socialist country” and “a confident, unified revolutionary people.”¹⁸ The Party had its sights set on regaining Chinese hearts and minds, and internationalism was summoned in service of this end.

Throughout the 1962 festivities in Beijing, municipal culture workers arranged for the screening of foreign revolutionary films, including North Korean and Cuban pictures.¹⁹ The following year, the Mass Parade Command Post of the Beijing Municipal Standing Committee drafted the list of slogans for the event. The list of forty-four slogans begins with a number of domestically oriented calls to modernize the PRC, achieve self-reliance (*zili gengsheng*), and strengthen national defense to protect the homeland.²⁰ The slogans then steer toward the international sphere, first broaching familiar tropes of Taiwan and nuclear weapons, before supporting the “African-American struggle against racism,” people’s struggles against U.S. aggression in Cuba, South Vietnam, Laos, Japan, and “national liberation movements across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.” The list concludes by returning to China’s domestic revolution, with short calls of: “Long live the Great Leap Forward!,” “Long live the people’s communes!,” “Long live the PRC!,” “Long live the CCP!,” and “Long live Chairman Mao!” These 1963 National Day slogans encouraged the popular audience shouting them of the intertwined nature of China’s revolution at home and the wider global struggle.

¹⁸ Ibid., 89.

¹⁹ Beijingshi Wenhua ju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “1962 nian guoqingjie qijian benshi wenhua gongzuo anpai qingkuang de baogao [Report on the Plans for Culture Work During Beijing’s 1962 National Day Period],” September 12, 1962, BMA, 164-001-00352, 83.

²⁰ Qunzhong Youxing Zhihui bu [Mass Demonstration Command Post], “Qingzhu zhonghua renmin gongheguo chengli shisi zhounian huhan de kouhao [Slogans to Shout During the Celebrations for the 14th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China],” September 17, 1963, BMA, 001-012-00576, 36-37.

By 1964, internationalism was poised to play an even greater role in the festivities. The Chinese Women's Federation alone invited sister organizations from Vietnam, North Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and a group representing several southwestern African nations.²¹ These groups toured the PRC for upwards of three weeks, visiting a number of major cities before taking part in the National Day celebrations in the capital. Touching upon the vast 'foreign friends' invited to attend the events that year, the Beijing Municipal Culture Bureau felt that this, in conjunction with it being the 15th anniversary of the PRC, meant that celebrations ought to be fitted alongside and reflect "the very good situation experienced in the international and domestic spheres, as well as China's new context of its great cultural revolution."²² Artistic performances should be deployed, the report spelled out, with a particular emphasis on those celebrating the anti-imperialist struggles of the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Beijing also called for screenings of several Chinese documentary films depicting the travels of Premier Zhou Enlai and PRC Chairman Liu Shaoqi to Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, and several African countries.²³

The event's slogans built upon the radicalized precedent of the year before. New phrases were introduced, including calls to "Thoroughly carry out the Socialist Education Movement! Carry through to the end the socialist revolution!" and "Commence a cultural revolution!"²⁴ Merging the domestic-global divide, the slogans then reminded the audience to "Sharpen vigilance, be prepared to at any moment smash the war provocations of the American

²¹ See "1964 nian guoqingjie quanguo fulian yaoqing de waibin jiankuang [Briefing on the Foreign Guests Invited by the Chinese Women's Federation for the 1964 National Day Festivities]," undated, SXPA, 196-1-198, 90-92.

²² Beijingshi wenhuaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], "关于国庆节期间本市文化活动安排的报告 Guanyu guoqingjie qijian benshi wenhua huodong anpai de baogao [Report Regarding Plans for Cultural Activities During Beijing's National Day Period]," September 19, 1964, BMA, 164-001-00412, 21.

²³ Beijingshi wenhuaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guoqingjie qijian shangying dianying fuyang pian [Films to Screen During the National Day Period]," undated, *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁴ "Guoqing zhonghua renmin gongheguo chengli shiwu zhounian huhan de kouhao [Slogans to Shout During the Celebrations for the 15th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China]" undated, BMA, 001-012-00642, 24-25.

imperialists!” Finally, the slogans then offered an expanded list of championed global causes from the 1963 event, effectively taking up issues including Indonesia’s dispute with Malaysia in Borneo, the Brazilian imprisonment of several Chinese trade representatives, and the guerilla movement taking hold in the Congo.

Beyond Beijing, the 1964 National Day celebrations were viewed as an important avenue for injecting internationalism into the everyday. The Shanghai-based (but well-circulated nationally) *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang Ribao*) set out to use the occasion to bring ideas of the world to bear on domestic imperatives. As planning documents reveal, articles throughout the National Day period were tailored to highlight “the PRC’s rise in international prestige and the enormous influence of Mao Zedong Thought and the CCP in the international revolutionary struggle.”²⁵ Articles should, the formal plans laid out, also “propagandize taking ‘all under heaven’ as one’s own responsibility...to put the revolution, one’s work, and one’s peers before oneself above all else.”²⁶ The report goes on to specifically call for articles discussing how Shanghai workers do precisely this, “ground[ing] themselves in their work post, but fac[ing] the entire country and the entire world.” The editorial staff also called for publishing stories in which ‘foreign friends’ praised New China and expressed their passion for Chairman Mao, – themes that would gain much popularity in the early Cultural Revolution – stories of Chinese development experts abroad, and a pictorial section entitled, “We have friends all over the world.” Though the National Day festivities in 1964 were ostensibly celebrating 15 years of

²⁵ Jiefang Ribao She [Liberation Daily News Agency], “Jiefang ribao guoqing shiwu zhounian xuanchuan jihua [Liberation Daily’s Propaganda Plans for the 15th Anniversary of National Day],” undated, SMA, A73-1-543, 67-70.

²⁶ In referring to ‘all under heaven,’ the report uses the term *tianxia*. Though the report here is using *tianxia* within the context of the larger Chinese proverb (*yi tianxia wei jiren*), which refers to ‘taking all under heaven as one’s personal duty,’ I read *tianxia* being here used as a reference to the wider world where China holds (or ought to hold) influence.

historical PRC accomplishments – and they did – the CCP also had its eyes firmly on the future, and China’s place in the world was an important part of the vision it put forth for people.

Though the 1965 National Day events were not commemorating a banner anniversary like the year before, the CCP’s deepening commitment to *domestic internationalism* gave way to still greater emphasis on global themes. Sketching out its aims with the festivities, the Beijing Municipal Culture Bureau wanted to see celebrations which “accord well with the domestic and international situation” to help strengthen the “socialist education of the masses.”²⁷ Participating artistic groups were asked to place special emphasis on performances reflecting Third World struggles against imperialism, and especially works depicting events unfolding in Vietnam. A host of foreign films were screened, including pictures from Japan, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, Albania, North Korea, and North Vietnam. Documentary films of Chinese leaders abroad were again deployed, among them more recent additions capturing Zhou Enlai’s trips to Tanzania, Pakistan, and the United Arab Republic. Dramatic performances formed a large part of the 1965 festivities, with drama troupes from all across the PRC descending on Beijing to stage their original works, most of which touched upon the struggle in Vietnam. Plays including *Flames of the South* and *Southern Youth* championed the guerilla struggle in South Vietnam against the U.S., while *War Drums on the Equator* and *The Raging Congo River* offered Chinese dramatizations of the Congolese fight against neocolonial Western aggression. Welcoming the vast audience into the act of performance themselves, mass choral singing events were arranged, belting out tunes including “Support Vietnam, Denounce America.” There was no mistaking the wider international context in which the PRC was celebrating its 16th year.

²⁷ Beijingshi wenhuaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu Guoqingjie qijian benshi wenhua huodong anpai de baogao [Report Regarding Plans for Cultural Activities During Beijing’s National Day Period],” September 17, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00444, 10.

Shanghai's celebrations pursued the same end. The event's slogans, prepared by the city's propaganda officials and specifically planned to be shouted during the parade and available for adorning banners, implored the need to "strike down the U.S." and "unite the strength of all those opposing the U.S."²⁸ The large-scale, Chinese original dance musical *Fury at Coconut Grove* was staged, depicting a South Vietnamese village under the boot of U.S. intervention.²⁹ Popular though it was, *Fury* paled in comparison to *Dance of an Entire Nation in Arms*, a massive dance drama designed specifically for this occasion. Drawing on no less than 480 dancers divided equally between genders, the performance was not so much about events in Vietnam, but rather about China's *response* to the Vietnamese struggle – about "the Chinese people's hardened conceptions of war preparedness, about protecting national defense, about resisting imperialist invasion, about supporting Vietnam, about supporting the staunch will of all peoples across Asia, Africa, and Latin America in their anti-American, patriotic struggles."³⁰ In many ways, *Dance of an Entire Nation* was a story about the very crowd amassed to view it.

By October 1965, war in Vietnam had become reality; with it came an equally real possibility of hostilities spilling across the border into China. But the CCP's interest in instrumentalizing events in Vietnam to their own political gain was also real, and the National Day festivities that month in Beijing, Shanghai, and all across the PRC were tailored accordingly. Wu Hung reads holiday parades as a "method and process of communication and identity-formation."³¹ Expanding Wu's point to mass events more broadly, the 1960s saw the

²⁸ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "1965 nian guoqingjie de kouhao [Slogans for National Day 1965]," undated, SMA, A22-2-1297, 1.

²⁹ Shanghai Shi Wenhuaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu chunjie, guoqingjie wenhua gongzuo de dasuan ji qingkuang huibao [Report Regarding the Plans and Circumstances of Culture Work During Spring Festival and National Day]," undated, SMA, B172-5-896, 62.

³⁰ Shanghai Shi Wenhuaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu chunjie, guoqingjie wenhua gongzuo de dasuan ji qingkuang huibao [Report Regarding the Plans and Circumstances of Culture Work During Spring Festival and National Day]," undated, *Ibid.*, 40.

³¹ Wu, *Remaking Beijing*, 86.

Party insist to a Chinese populace they were part both of a vast Chinese nation striving toward a socialist modernity, *and* of a worldwide community of revolutionaries with history tilting in their direction. The similarly large-scale celebrations enveloping International Worker’s Day would prove another forum ripe for the Party’s advancement of this argument.

What the annual May 1st Worker’s Day celebrations lacked in relative cachet to its National Day counterpart, it made up for in its inherent transnationality. Accordingly, Worker’s Day was pre-primed to take on a greater tone of internationalism in China’s 1960s. Tellingly, a Beijing Municipal Propaganda Department list of the slogans to be used during the 1963 event had one crossed out in pen: “Long live the unity between countries of the socialist camp!”³² Certainly, as Scarlett’s work argues, such modifications were tied to the Sino-Soviet split and China’s according effort to expand its influence into the Third World. At the same time, however, we might also read the CCP’s shifting internationalism not merely as a *reaction* to its rift with Moscow, but instead as the seizing of the opportunity afforded by no longer playing little brother to the Soviet Union; an opportunity that now granted Beijing the chance to present a more robust internationalism – one championing issues of race, postcolonial development, sovereignty, and the pursuit of modernity. The kind of internationalism the Party had wanted to champion since the inception of the PRC, and even before it wielded a state of its own. Such ideas not only predated the Sino-Soviet split (and, for that matter, the Sino-Soviet alliance), but they also aligned closely with the ideals cherished in China’s own domestic enterprise of advancing toward a socialist modernity.

As the Beijing Municipal Culture Bureau set out to plan the 1964 Worker’s Day festivities, therefore, it pinpointed the need to fashion the event to help strengthen “the socialist

³² Zhongguo Gongchandang Beijingshi Weiyuanhui [Beijing Municipal Party Committee], “1963 nian ‘wuyi’ jie de zhuyao kouhao [Important Slogans for International Worker’s Day 1963],” undated, BMA, 001-012-00576, 6.

education of the masses.”³³ To do so, the plans called for incorporating a variety of internationalist elements, including foreign films, songs, plays, and documentary movies such as *Public Enemy of the World’s People* cataloguing an array of villainous crimes perpetrated by American imperialism. The following year’s event likewise called for artistic and cultural performances treating anti-imperialist struggles across the Third World, and Vietnam specifically.³⁴ Fulfilling these demands, the festivities came to include screening the Vietnamese film *The Still Flames of Justice*, stalking local bookstores with works and literature pertaining to China’s support of Vietnam, and the staging of plays about events in Vietnam and the Congo. Smaller-scale ‘living newspaper plays’ (*huobaoju*) – in which a small handful of performers theatrically act out stories from the news – also dramatically brought Vietnam to Beijing on May 1st.³⁵ Large steles were erected around Tiananmen Square, brandishing slogans calling to “be vigilant” amidst the possibility of an American invasion, and “resolutely support” the Vietnamese people’s patriotic anti-American struggle.

But Tiananmen Square was only the central of several venues throughout the city for the 1965 Worker’s Day events in the capital. As Beijing Municipal Standing Committee planning documents make clear, such mass events were highly choreographed and intricately organized affairs. Several important venues aside from Tiananmen would host their own similar mass events, including the Working People’s Cultural Palace, the Temple of Heaven, the Temple of

³³ Beijing Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu ‘wuyi’ laodongjie qijian benshi wenhua huodong anpai qingkuang de baogao [Report Regarding the Planning of Cultural Activities During Beijing’s International Worker’s Day Period],” April 22, 1964, BMA, 164-001-00412, 1.

³⁴ Beijing Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu ‘wuyi’ qijian wenhua huodong anpai de qingkuang [Regarding Planning for Cultural Activities During the International Worker’s Day Period],” April 26, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00444, 1.

³⁵ Zhongguo Gongchandang Beijingshi Weiyuanhui [Beijing Municipal Party Committee], “Zhongguo Beijing shiwei guanyu qingzhu 1965 nian ‘wuyi’ guoji laodongjie huodong jihua de baogao [Beijing Municipal Party Committee Report on Planning for Activities During the 1965 International Worker’s Day Festivities],” April 28, 1965, BMA, 001-005-00520, 46.

the Sun, the Summer Palace and a handful of prominent parks.³⁶ Each venue would privilege particular social groups in accordance with their location. Since the Summer Palace was in proximity to many of Beijing's most prominent universities, for example, the events there would make students the focal point. Uniting all these events, however, was the premium placed on highlighting Vietnam and a number of other internationalist causes and themes.

The Shanghai festivities followed the same directives. While the actual festivities of Worker's Day proceeded in a similar vein to those of Beijing and other cities around the country, the Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department seized the extended holiday to engage in 'current events' training (*shishi xingshi de xuanchuan jiaoyu*) in most all work units across the city. With the escalating U.S. intervention in Vietnam the order of the day, these educational sessions were primarily focused on discussing the situation unfolding there. As the report spelled out, "all factories, industries, shops, schools, organizations, small neighborhoods and suburban people's communes" should organize a variety of events during the May 1st holiday period to teach "common people" about the 'support Vietnam, resist America' campaign.³⁷ Though some attendees were reportedly frustrated at having their holiday consumed by such training sessions, these meetings indicate the importance the CCP attached to seizing the context of mass events and celebrations to propagandize to their captive audience.

Unsurprisingly, similar training preceded the 1966 Shanghai Worker's Day events. All levels of Party apparatus in the city were instructed to engage the broad cadres under their auspices in 'contextual education,' privileging especially the international situation.³⁸ Cadres

³⁶ Ibid., 45.

³⁷ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Guanyu yuanYue kangMei xingshi jiaoyu de qingkuang he yijian de baogao [Report Regarding the Circumstances and Views on 'Support Vietnam, Resist America' Situational Education]," May 5, 1965, SMA, A22-2-1295, 1.

³⁸ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Shiwei guanyu jinian 1966 nian 'wuyi' guoji laodongjie de tongzhi [Shanghai Municipal Party Committee Notification on Commemorating 1966's International Worker's Day]," undated, SMA, A22-2-1396, 3.

should learn how “the current situation in the world is extremely favorable for revolution.” The “east wind continues to overpower the west wind,” and the U.S. imperialists and Soviet revisionists are steadily declining. The world’s revolutionary people’s movement continues to forge ahead, and has become the “dominant trend of the age.” “Great upheaval, great divergence, and great reorganization – these are the distinguishing features of the current international situation,” this training informed attendees. Directly appealing to the audience’s nationalism, Party officials were to teach that the “the more anti-China the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries become, the more our actions are proven to be correct.” They implored the need to resist its American enemies and the Soviet “traitors,” and embrace the “new high tide of world revolution approaching.”

Following these preparatory training sessions, the plans called for Party officials at all levels to partake in the Worker’s Day celebratory activities “together with ordinary people.”³⁹ With that year’s event occurring on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the stakes for using mass events to mobilize the Chinese masses were high, and internationalism served as the fulcrum in leveraging an annual holiday for the mounting mass movement. The Beijing festivities that year were no different, emphasizing films and songs celebrating world revolution. Over 340,000 copies of a newly published songbook were distributed throughout the city in the days before May 1st, including amongst others the recently crafted ditty “The Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America Want Liberation.”⁴⁰ On the morning of May 1st at Tiananmen Square, a four-and-a-half hour mass sing-along broadcast live on the radio featured songs including “Liberate the South,” “Forge Ahead, Armed Peoples of South Vietnam!,” and no less than three different

³⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁰ Beijing Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu ‘wuyi’ qijian wenhua huodong anpai qingkuang jianbao [Briefing Regarding Cultural Activities Plans for the International Worker’s Day Period],” April 26, 1966, BMA, 164-002-00017, 2.

renditions of “The Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America Want Liberation.”⁴¹ In much the same way that extensive media coverage of mass events worked to help Chinese readers feel connected to a shared moment, so too did such simultaneous broadcasts offer listeners across the country the chance to be there in Beijing, arm-in-arm with their countrymen, who themselves imagined being arm-in-arm with comrades around the globe.

Though the National Day and Worker’s Day holiday periods offered the Party the greatest access to mass and captive popular audience, they were not the only annual festivities infused with internationalism during the 1960s. At the 1965 Beijing commemoration of International Children’s Day, a Communist Youth League official seized the occasion to offer a speech drawing parallels between China’s domestic achievements and the changing international situation. Just as Worker’s Day was itself a holiday inherently transnational in its focus, Children’s Day likewise opened the door to the CCP painting a portrait of the world for a domestic audience. The speech defined ongoing events in Vietnam, the Congo, and the Dominican Republic as part of an “enormous victory” for the anti-American forces of the world.⁴² It then transitioned smoothly to China’s own “victories” in building socialism by “depending on self-reliance.” Amidst our victories however, he continued, “we can never forget that countless people and children around the world remain oppressed and have yet to be liberated.” No mass holiday occasion was to be overlooked in ushering internationalism into everyday PRC life.

The annual August 1st celebration commemorating the birth of the People’s Liberation Army provided yet another such avenue. In preparation for the 1966 event, Beijing Municipal

⁴¹ Ibid., 22.

⁴² Zhongguo Gongchanzhuyi Qingniantuan Beijingshi Weiyuanhui [Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee], “Shaoniandui guoqing youxing liandui yaodian, guiding he ‘liuyi’ guoji ertongjie huodong jihua deng [Plans, Essential Points, and Regulations for Activities of the Young Pioneers National Day Parade Team of the Communist Youth League During the International Children’s Day Festivities],” BMA, 100-003-01584, 16.

Standing Committee plans explicitly called for using the occasion to help mobilize people to participate in the “Great Cultural Revolution movement” and its forerunner, the Socialist Education Movement.⁴³ In so doing, the plans explicitly advised “merging together the current international and domestic situations.” Here, officials would discuss the recent U.S. bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong in North Vietnam within the context of the “flourishingly developing” and “historic in human history” Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.⁴⁴ Seizing on the PLA-inspired holiday, they would initiate a “Campaign to Support Soldiers and Their Dependents,” to serve as a conceptual link between events in Vietnam and the Cultural Revolution at home. The plans also noted that the holiday occasion would allow them to draw upon “traditional customs” to advance their argument.

No holiday, however, saw the merging of tradition and revolutionary internationalism quite like Chinese New Year. Typically offering individuals the chance to return to their hometown for up to two weeks, the Lunar New Year celebrations lent perfectly to the CCP’s dissemination of messages promoting internationalism. In rural Shaanxi province’s Hu County, culture and education officials planned a number of internationalist art performances during the 1964 holiday, as part of an effort to “merge the old and the new.”⁴⁵ Amongst the works staged were traditional Lunar New Year folk festival performances (*shehuo*) treating events abroad, including *Drive Away the Ruthlessly Ambitious American Wolves* and *Lyndon Johnson’s Fantasy*. County reports detailing spectator response allege most people found these works to be

⁴³ Beijingshi Renmin Wei yuanhui [Beijing Municipal Party Committee], “Beijingshi renmin wei yuanhui guanyu jinian ‘bayi’ jianjunjie sanshijiu zhounian kaizhan yongjun youshu huodong de tongzhi [Beijing Municipal Party Committee Notification Regarding Launching the ‘Support Soldiers and Their Dependents’ Campaign During Commemorations for the 39th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Liberation Army],” July 16, 1966, BMA, 164-002-00020, 8-9.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁵ Huxian Wenjiao Weishengju [Hu County Bureau of Culture, Education and Public Health], “Baosong chunjie wenhua xuanchuan huodong zongjie baogao de han [Final Report Letter Recommending Cultural Propaganda Activities During Spring Festival],” March 25, 1964, SXPA, 232-2-648, 43.

“buzzing with excitement,” offering “education” through new “knowledge.”⁴⁶ In other counties in the north of Shaanxi, local drama troupes wrote and performed folk ‘street corner plays’ (*jietouju*), including one called *Support Panama*.⁴⁷ According to culture officials there, the play effectively “strengthened the hatred local peasants feel toward the most evil enemy of the world’s people, American imperialism.” There were even a few peasants who, upon the play’s completion, allegedly shouted “American devils, get out of Panama!” Drawing on both the captive Chinese New Year audience and its captivation with traditional holiday cultural practices, the Party adroitly disseminated their reading of the world.

The mass events offered by annual holiday celebrations were an important part of the CCP’s effort to argue for the existence of a broad community of world revolutionaries, of which the Chinese people were an important (indeed, a leading) component. In discussing this transformative role of mass events, Wu Hung describes mass event attendees who are “no longer scattered individuals but have become part of an immense body of ‘friends and comrades.’”⁴⁸ The infusion of internationalism into this already potent arm of Party propaganda, I argue, expanded this imagined community further still. Not only were attendees invited to be part of a vast Chinese community, but they were also welcomed into the worldwide fraternity of global revolutionaries. As the 1960s would also see the CCP invent a rash of wholly new mass events inspired by struggles around the world, popular Chinese imaginations of the world – and their place in it – would only continue to grow.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Shaanxisheng Qunzhong Yishuguan [Shaanxi Provincial Mass Arts Center], “Guanyu chunjie wenyu huodong diaocha baogao [Investigative Report Regarding Recreational Activities During Spring Festival],” March 29, 1965, Ibid., 58.

⁴⁸ Wu, *Remaking Beijing*, 99.

Inventing Internationalist Mass Events, 1963-66

If annual holiday celebrations offered the chance to infuse mass events with internationalist content, the CCP was not content to simply wait around for them to arrive each year. Instead, the Party was proactive, inventing synchronized mass events across the PRC in response to events around the world. Drawing on all the same benefits offered by mass holiday celebrations – crowds, imagined unity and solidarity, artistic performances, shared conceptions of space and time, foreigner corroboration – internationalist mass events brought along an even stronger sense of being spontaneous, organic, and popularly-inspired. As such, they came to occupy an even greater role in the CCP's strategy of *domestic internationalism* throughout this period than their holiday counterparts.

To be sure, specialized internationalist mass events had existed before China's 1960s. Seminal PRC international events like the Korean War and the 1954 and 1958 Taiwan Strait crises had certainly triggered mass events across China designed to drum up popular mobilization and support. So too had events abroad in which China was not directly implicated, including the 1956 Suez Crisis and 1960 coup in Turkey, amongst others. Where specialized mass rallies and demonstrations in the PRC took a turn following 1962, however, was in their frequency and thematic content. Throughout the 1963-66 period – and especially on the eve of the Cultural Revolution's outbreak midway through 1966 – seemingly spontaneous, large-scale events were a common feature of everyday PRC life, championing issues including Third World revolution, race, decolonization and sovereignty amidst Cold War superpower meddling. Owing to the CCP's needs of popular political allegiance and mobilization amidst its comprehensive

domestic and international crisis, inventing mass Chinese internationalism through events of this kind became a valuable and powerful tool.

In bringing together specialized mass events in response to global happenings as they occurred around the world, the Party drew upon groups including the Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace. Staffed by prominent Party leaders, including the famed writer Guo Moruo, the Committee was a variation of a similar group formed amidst the Korean War to drum up support at home in the PRC.⁴⁹ The group was committed to "supporting the national democratic independence movements of countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and beyond," by "opposing imperialism and neo-colonialism."⁵⁰ To do so, the Committee was tasked with "organizing rallies" and all types of "propaganda activities," including drawing regularly upon artwork, films, and public speeches to convey its internationalist messages. Working closely with another internationalist Party organization, the Chinese Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity, as well as the Chinese Women's Federation, the Committee to Safeguard World Peace played a key role too in inviting various foreign friends and groups to tour the PRC, oftentimes participating in a mass rally during their visit.

These Party organizations would be at the forefront of the specialized internationalist mass events that became a common fixture in China's 1960s. Not only did these events increase in their frequency during this period, but the events they celebrated dramatically shifted toward those occurring across the Third World, and implicating themes of race, decolonization, development, and sovereignty. Though familiar tropes including Korean War anniversaries and

⁴⁹ The Shanghai chapter of the Committee was led by Jin Zhonghua, Vice-Mayor of Shanghai, and included among its members the celebrated writer Ba Jin.

⁵⁰ Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Zhongguo renmin baowei shijie heping weiyuanhui Shanghaishi fenhui gaikuang [General Survey of the Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter]," June 1963, SMA, C36-2-41, 1-2.

emphasizing Sino-Albanian ties persisted (albeit with new themes pronounced), events in Vietnam, Panama, the Dominican Republic, the Congo, and the American South added a new dimension to these mass rallies.⁵¹ At their core, these events were much more invested than ever before in helping the Chinese audience to imagine a wider world community, and their role within it.

In his reading of these specialized events in China's 1960s, Zachary Scarlett looks at those commemorating Eastern European revolutionary anniversaries as well as several Vietnam-

⁵¹ On events during this period summoning such familiar tropes, see Heda Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Shanghai gejie renmin fandui Meijun jixu qinzhan Nanchaoxian dahui jihua [Plans for the Shanghai People's Mass Rally Against the U.S. Military's Continued Occupation of South Korea]," June 26, 1963 and Heda Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Shanghai gejie renmin qingzhu wojun zaici jiluo U-2 feiji shengli dahui jihua [Plans for the Shanghai People's Mass Rally Celebrating Our Military's Second Successful Downing of a U-2 Plane]," November 9, 1963, SMA, A22-2-1130, Waijiaobu [Central Ministry of Foreign Affairs], "Guanyu qingzhu A'erbaniya qingzhu 20 zhounian de qingshi [Request for Instructions Regarding Celebrating Albania's 20th National Anniversary]," October 23, 1964 and Shaanxisheng ji Xi'anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], "Xi'an gejie renmin zhichi Banama renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi douzheng dahui jihua [Plans for the Xi'an People's Mass Rally in Support of the Panamanian People's Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism]," January 13, 1964 and Shaanxisheng ji Xi'anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], "Guanyu Xi'an gejie renmin zhichi Gangguo (Li) renmin fandui Mei, Bidiguozhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe zhandou dahui ji youxing shiwei de qingshi baogao [Report Regarding the Xi'an People's Mass Rally and Protest Demonstration in Support of the Congolese (Leopoldville) People's Struggle Against the Armed Invasion of U.S. and Belgian Imperialism]," November 30, 1964 and Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Xi'an Gejie Renmin Zhichi Banama Renmin Fandui Meidiguozhuyi Dahui [The Xi'an People's Rally in Support of the Panamanian People in Their Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism], "Dahui Tongdian [Rally Telegram]," January 15, 1964, SXPA 196-1-218, Zhongguo Gongchanzhuyi Qingnian tuan Beijingshi Weiyuanhui [Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee], "Jinian Chaoxian zuguo jiefang zhanzheng shiwu zhounian jinianri Beijingshi xuelian fuzhuxi de jianghuagao [Draft of the Speech by the Vice-Chairman of the Beijing Student Federation in Commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the Memorial Day for the Korean War to Liberate the Homeland]," June 26, 1965, BMA, 100-001-01100, Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Shanghai gejie renmin zhichi Duominijia renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahui jihua [Plans for the Shanghai People's Mass Rally in Support of the People of the Dominican Republic in Their Opposition to the Armed Invasion of U.S. Imperialism]," undated and Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Shanghai gejie renmin jinian 'liu-erwu' Chaoxian zuguo jiefang zhanzheng shiwu zhounian he zhichi Chaoxian renmin fanMei douzheng yue dahui jihua [Plans for the Shanghai People's Mass Rally in Commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the '6-25' Korean War to Liberate the Homeland and in Support of the Korean People's Struggle Against the U.S.]," SMA A22-2-1186, Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Guanyu Shimin fandui Meidi qinzhan Taiwan shiwu zhounian shiwei dahui jihua he jianghua cailiao [Speech Materials and Plans Regarding the Shanghai People's Mass Demonstration Rally Against the 15th Anniversary of U.S. Imperialism's Occupation of Taiwan]," June 1965, A22-2-1293.

related rallies.⁵² Scarlett interprets the former within the context of China's changing needs amidst the Sino-Soviet. By contrast, he sees the Vietnam-themed mass events as introducing Vietnam as a "codeword to encompass foreign and domestic threats," including the very real possibility (by 1965) of the war spilling onto Chinese soil.⁵³ While Beijing's rift with Moscow and its practical security concerns initiated by the U.S. presence in Vietnam should not be understated, I see a wider variety of themes at play in these specialized mass events, among them resonant ideas of race, postcolonial development and sovereignty, as mentioned above.

These themes not only transcend the Sino-Soviet and the situation in Vietnam, but they also suggest a conceptual continuity on the part of the CCP and the popular Chinese audience with whom they resonated – these ideas were not new, they were simply taken from the backburner and brought to the fore. This section will look at two types of specialized internationalist mass events in China's 1960s. First, it will treat the vast array of Vietnam-related rallies and protests, paying particular attention to how these events were fashioned to appear as spontaneous, organic, and inspired by ordinary Chinese people themselves. Second, this section will look at the variety of mass events pertaining to events *beyond* Vietnam and treating issues of race, Third World revolution, and postcolonial development. Here, the Party sought to advance an argument about a broad community across the postcolonial world all striving forward together – an argument that relied upon more than merely summoning the events in Vietnam. Both the tangible and violent anti-American struggle in Vietnam *and* the celebrated events in the Third World beyond Vietnam, therefore, were essential to the argument Beijing was making. By celebrating ideas of racial equality, decolonization, development, and

⁵² See Scarlett, "China After the Sino-Soviet Split," 69-78, 84-102.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 80.

political sovereignty, these events were able to unite an imagined community along a set of inspired principles rather than merely in opposition to armed western aggression.

Vietnam and a Well-Planned Spontaneity

As the U.S. commitment to back South Vietnam steadily deepened by 1963, domestic Chinese propaganda in support of North Vietnam and National Liberation Front (NLF) guerillas spiked.⁵⁴ Vietnam was useful to the CCP's strategy of *domestic internationalism* not simply because North Vietnam was a staunch ally and the war genuinely did threaten Chinese national security. Events there were also important for serving as a rallying cry for leftist revolutionaries across the world, and mass Chinese rallies sought to draw upon Vietnam to help a PRC audience try and forge an imagined connection with this community beyond its borders. As the administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson incrementally ensconced America in South Vietnamese politics and the North-South struggle more broadly, Vietnam took on greater relevance in the global leftist imagination, and in everyday Chinese life accordingly.

In July 1963, for example, large rallies were held in a number of cities to “Oppose the American Imperialist Invasion of South Vietnam and Support the Vietnamese People’s Struggle to Peacefully Unite Their Homeland.” In Xi’an, in one of many iterations of this rally occurring across the PRC, the Public Roads Institute hosted the event. In his keynote speech, the school’s head lauded the Vietnamese people’s “staunch encouragement for all oppressed people’s around the world and their revolutionary struggles” and their contribution to “peace in Southeast Asia

⁵⁴ The National Liberation Front (regularly referred to as Viet Cong by contemporary western observers) was the guerilla and army forces of North Vietnam tasked with fomenting insurgency in South Vietnam. Given this role, they were distinct from the North Vietnamese army, known as the People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN).

and the world” beyond.⁵⁵ His remarks were followed by a speech from a student representative who declared that the Vietnamese and Chinese people “shared weal and woe,” owing to the fact they “had both suffered at the hands of imperialist invasion.”⁵⁶ In addition to those in attendance, work units in the Xi’an region studied the Vietnamese struggle before and after the event, with some inviting Vietnamese students there to visit and educate workers about it.⁵⁷

That November, the assassination of South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem threatened to ignite the situation there. While Beijing publicly interpreted Diem’s death as Washington’s casual disposal of its problem puppet, that month the Party also arranged for mass Chinese events celebrating the PRC’s November 1 downing of a U.S. U-2 spy plane. Large-scale rallies commemorating the downing were held in Xi’an and Shanghai, amongst other major urban centers, with the Committee to Safeguard World Peace playing a leading role in the planning. While this particular spy plane was tied more to U.S. support for Taiwan, these events positioned its downing within the context of American imperialist designs for control of Asia. Plans for the Xi’an event called for a large parade through the city center, mass rallies in factories and schools throughout the city, collective gatherings dedicated to listening to radio broadcasts of the event, and extensive coverage by the *Shaanxi Daily* (*Shaanxi Ribao*) and the *Xi’an Evening Paper* (*Xi’an Wanbao*) including coverage of the simultaneous rallies in Beijing and other cities.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Xi’an Gonglu Xueyuan [Xi’an Institute of Public Roads], “Zai fandui Meidiguozhuyi qinlüe Yuenan nanfang, zhichi Yuenan renmin heping tongyi zuguo douzheng dahuishang Cheng Feibai yuanzhang de jianghua [Speech by Dean Cheng Feibai at the Mass Rally in Opposition to U.S. Imperialism’s Invasion of Southern Vietnam and in Support of the Vietnamese People’s Struggle to Peacefully Unite the Homeland],” July 20, 1963, SXPA, 196-1-184, 44.

⁵⁶ “Zai fandui Meidiguozhuyi qinlüe Yuenan nanfang, zhichi Yuenan renmin heping tongyi zuguo douzheng dahuishang xuesheng daibiao de jianghua [Speech by Student Representative at the Mass Rally in Opposition to U.S. Imperialism’s Invasion of Southern Vietnam and in Support of the Vietnamese People’s Struggle to Peacefully Unite the Homeland],” undated, *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁷ Guoying Ersiba Chang Zhengzhibu [Number 247 State-Owned Factory Political Department], “untitled,” July 26, 1963, *Ibid.*, 41-43.

⁵⁸ Shaanxisheng ji Xi’anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi’an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], “Guanyu Xi’an qingzhu wojun zaici jiluo U-2 feiji shijian zhankai qunzhongxing de xuanchuan jiaoyu huodong de qingshi [Request for Instructions in Launching Mass Propaganda

The Shanghai event followed a similar plan. High-ranking members of the Committee to Safeguard World Peace would commence the speeches, followed by members of local-level organizations and work units, and concluding with heroic testimonials by two pilots of the Chinese Air Force.⁵⁹ Like the Xi'an version, the rally culminated in a number of slogans imploring the U.S. to get out of Taiwan, South Korea, South Vietnam, Laos, and everywhere across the Asian, African, Latin American world. Less than a year later, another downing of a U.S. spy plane would give occasion for yet another set of events.

The July 1964 mass events that ensued included a large-scale Shanghai rally featuring a speech by the acclaimed writer Ba Jin. On either side of the main event stage hung banners calling for “safeguarding the homeland, safeguarding world peace.”⁶⁰ The corresponding rally in Beijing was actively filmed, with the footage thereafter fashioned into short news clips and documentary films.⁶¹ Speeches at the event spun a conceptual thread connecting U.S. support for Taiwan, its efforts to spy on Chinese behavior, and its interest in carrying hostilities in Vietnam onto PRC soil.⁶² The opening remarks to the rally in Xi'an captured the same sentiment, declaring that U.S. actions in Laos and South Vietnam “furiously intensify the U.S.’s military provocations and armed threats against the Chinese people.”⁶³ The U.S., the speech went on, was nothing more than a “local despot” seeking to enlarge its territory and expand

and Education Activities Regarding Xi'an Celebration of Our Military's Second Downing of a U-2 Plane],” November 11, 1963, *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁹ Heda Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Shanghai gejie renmin qingzhu wojun zaici jiluo U-2 feiji shengli dahui jihua [Plans for the Shanghai People's Mass Rally Celebrating Our Military's Second Successful Downing of a U-2 Plane],” November 9, 1963, SMA, A22-2-1130, 24.

⁶⁰ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department] and Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Waishi Xiaozu [Shanghai Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Small Group], “Shanghai gejie renmin qingzhu wojun disanci jiluo Meizhi Jiangfei U-2- feiji shengli dahui jihua [Plans for the Shanghai People's Mass Rally Celebrating Our Military's Third Successful Downing of a U.S. Manufactured U-2 Plane of the Bandit Chiang Kai-shek],” July 30, 1964, SMA, C36-2-48, 3.

⁶¹ Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split,” 95.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ “Kaimu ci [Opening Address],” undated, SXPA, 196-1-219, 65.

hostilities in Vietnam, in China, in the Congo, and in Cuba. These events prove that American imperialism is the “irreconcilable enemy of the Chinese people” and the “fiendish enemy of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the entire world’s people.”⁶⁴

If the Xi’an opening ceremony was designed to help a Chinese audience imagine themselves part of a broader global community, it did so by first alerting them to unity within their own nation, and even their own immediate surroundings. The remarks continued,

We have been confronting U.S. imperialism for a long time already and armed threat can never frighten the 650 million Chinese people. We the people of Xi’an, from all walks of life, stand resolutely with all our countrymen, continuing to strengthen our concepts of class struggle and national defense, prepared to raise alarm at a moment’s notice, prepared to give everything and dare to invade and meet the enemy head on, if necessary.⁶⁵

A subsequent speech declared “all the people of our province (Shaanxi)” to be united with “our countrymen.”⁶⁶ Indeed, planning documents for the event from the Shaanxi Provincial and Xi’an Municipal Foreign Affairs Office indicate how officials wanted to use the event to “mobilize public opinion” to “strengthen conceptions of class struggle and national defense.”⁶⁷ Officials also sketched out how they intended to “link up” the Taiwan issue (at the heart of the U-2 downing) with “the situation in Indochina,” stressing a myriad of its traits including the U.S.’s “direct interference with the internal politics of Laos.”⁶⁸ Though mass PRC demonstrations concerning Vietnam in the 1960s were designed to appear as spontaneous outgrowths of the Chinese people’s anger, they were anything but organic. Various Party organs were shrewd and

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “Zai Xi’an gejie qingzhu wojun sidanci jiluo Meizhi Jiangfei U-2 feiji shengli dahuishang de jianghua [Speech at the Xi’an People’s Mass Rally Celebrating Our Military’s Third Successful Downing of a U.S. Manufactured U-2 Plane of the Bandit Chiang Kai-shek],” July 16, 1964, Ibid., 70.

⁶⁷ Shaanxisheng Ji Xi’an shi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi’an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], “Guanyu Xi’an shi qingzhu wojun disanci jiluo Meizhi Jiangfei U-2 feiji shijian zhankai qunzhongxing de xuanchuan jiaoyu huodong de qingshi [Request for Instructions Regarding Launching Mass Propaganda and Education Activities Regarding Xi’an’s Celebration Our Military’s Third Successful Downing of a U.S. Manufactured U-2 Plane of the Bandit Chiang Kai-shek],” July 14, 1964, Ibid., 59.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 60.

calculating in their efforts to use these mass events to help forge an idea of a unified Chinese nation, whose domestic revolution served a global community well beyond its borders.

In 1964, however, these Vietnam-centered mass events were only getting started. Following a week of nationwide rallies in July commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Geneva Conference settling the French-Indochina War, the Gulf of Tonkin Incident that August marked a turning point in both America's miring in Vietnam and mass public Chinese demonstrations of support.⁶⁹ As the Johnson administration seemed to be paving its path to war throughout late 1964 and into early 1965, the PRC was flush with a veritable wave of seemingly popularly inspired mass protest rallies. The first of these events, in August 1964, were portrayed as an explicit Chinese popular response to the events in the Tonkin Gulf.

In Beijing, as Zachary Scarlett describes, the U.S. allegations and reaction to the incident were portrayed as having affected all sectors of Chinese society.⁷⁰ Planners of the event drove home this point by commissioning speeches from people representing all walks of PRC life – workers, farmers, students, soldiers. All Chinese people, the Party was suggesting, had skin in the game; Vietnam was the battleground, but we all were combatants. The participation of this diverse group of Chinese citizens, I would argue, thus did more than merely suggesting they

⁶⁹ On the July 1964 rallies commemorating the anniversary of the Geneva Conference, see Zhongguo Gongchandang Shanghai Shi Weiyuanhui Waishi Xiaozu [Shanghai Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Small Group], “Guanyu benshi juxing zhichi Yuenan renmin fanMei aiguo douzheng huodong de qingshi baogao [Report Regarding Shanghai Holding Activities in Support of the Vietnamese People's Patriotic Struggle Against the U.S.],” July 15, 1964 and Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghai Shi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Guanyu zhichi Yuenan renmin fanMei douzheng dahui gongzuo de jiancha baogao [Investigative Report Regarding Work on the Mass Rally in Support of the Vietnamese People's Struggle Against the U.S.],” August 19, 1964, SMA, C36-2-49, and Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split,” 94-102. The Tonkin Gulf Incident refers to the events of August 2, 1964, when an American destroyer off the coast of North Vietnam claimed to have come under enemy fire. Despite dubious evidence of the attack having actually occurred, the administration of Lyndon Johnson used the claim as a pretext for securing congressional authority to substantially enhance the American military commitment to South Vietnam, paving the way for the eventual landing of U.S. ground troops there the following year.

⁷⁰ Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split,” 98.

were all affected by the situation in Vietnam; it gave them a direct (albeit imagined) role to play in the struggle there.

The same strategy was applied in the Shanghai version of the event. The rally there featured speeches by a PLA soldier stationed in the city, a representative of the Shanghai Association of Industry and Commerce, a member of the People's Militia reserves, a rural peasant from the surrounding area, and a Fudan University student. The student, Hu Aiben, offered an impassioned statement, declaring that the U.S.'s "brazen cheating" of the Vietnamese people and their rights cannot blind the "bright eyes of the entire world's people."⁷¹ "All sovereign countries in the world," she continued, "possess the right to adopt all measures to defend their land, waters, and airspace."

Hu's words fell on the ears of an 11,000 person strong crowd gathered in Shanghai's Culture Square, but were also simultaneously broadcast on the radio to all factories, offices, schools, army barracks, and people's communes in the region.⁷² The event was organized by a gamut of Party organs, including the Shanghai chapters of the Committee to Safeguard World Peace, the Communist Youth League, and the Women's Federation. Prominent Shanghai Party leaders and propagandists such as Cao Diqu and Shi Ximin took in the day's proceedings, which also featured a number of Vietnamese students and technical trainees living in the city.

Cameramen filmed the full event, with instructions to formulate news clips from their footage.⁷³

⁷¹ "Fudan daxue xuesheng Hu Aiben tongzhi zai Shanghai gejie renmin zhichi Yuenan renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahuishang de fayan [Speech by Fudan University Student Comrade Hu Aiben at the Shanghai People's Mass Rally in Support of the Vietnamese People's Opposition to the Armed Invasion of U.S. Imperialism]," August 10, 1964, SMA, C36-2-50, 53.

⁷² Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Shanghai gejie renmin zhichi Yuenan renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahui jihua [Plans for the Shanghai People's Mass Rally in Support of the Vietnamese People's Opposition to the Armed Invasion of U.S. Imperialism]," August 8, 1964, SMA, A22-2-1197, 26.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 28.

Several major cities throughout Shaanxi province, in western China, hosted their own mass events in response to Tonkin Gulf. Over August 10-11, large-scale rallies took place in Xi'an, Yan'an, and Hanzhong and, from August 10-12, a 60,000 person "protest demonstration" filled the streets of Xi'an.⁷⁴ As one Shaanxi Provincial Foreign Affairs Small Group instruction document makes clear, orders came down from Beijing to spark mass "demonstrations" amongst the people, which will exhibit "an impressive display of power" and will offer an "extensive and deep lesson on internationalism."⁷⁵ Over the following few days, the directive went on, cities should organize mass rallies, paste slogans, stage 'living newspaper' plays, and conduct study sessions in all work units where officials should "encourage raising production, work and study in the name of supporting the Vietnamese people."⁷⁶ Local newspapers, radio stations, and televised news broadcasters were told to step up their reporting of these events. Though the CCP was keen to suggest otherwise, the nationwide August 1964 mass rallies and protests were anything but organic – they were calculated, deliberate, and conducted with the goal of popular political mobilization firmly in mind.

With the situation in Vietnam continuing to escalate, the Party eagerly stoked the fire of popular interest they had sparked at home. That December, the Shanghai Committee to Safeguard World Peace organized a sizable rally to commemorate the 4th anniversary of the

⁷⁴ Shaanxisheng Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office] and Shaanxisheng Wenhua ju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], "Shaanxisheng renmin zhichi Yuenan renmin kangMei douzheng huodong youguan tongji shuzi [Statistical Figures Relating to the Activities of the People of Shaanxi Province in Support of the Vietnamese People's Struggle to Resist the U.S.]," May 25, 1965, SXPA, 196-1-255, 144.

⁷⁵ Shaanxisheng Ji Xi'an shi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], "Guanyu zhiyuan Yuenan renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe de shiwei yundong de anpai yijian de qingshi [Request for Instructions on the Plans and Views Regarding the Protest Movement Regarding Supporting the Vietnamese People's Opposition to the Armed Invasion of U.S. Imperialism]," August 8, 1964, SXPA, 196-1-219, 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

founding of the National Liberation Front, attended by several NLF fighters.⁷⁷ Shortly into 1965, however, the context in Vietnam again shifted. In February and March the Johnson administration fatefully began American intervention in Vietnam in earnest, landing ground troops in the South and commencing a sustained bombing campaign against the North. Accordingly, the PRC sprang into high gear, escalating both its genuine measures to ensure its national security as well as its instrumentalization of the Vietnam conflict for its own purposes of political mobilization.

As early as a week into February, the Party Central Committee in Beijing called for mass demonstrations across 11 major Chinese cities. The Party requested that these cities spend five full days from February 8-12 holding mass demonstrations, composed of a combined “roughly 10 million” people.⁷⁸ Slogans for the event moved swiftly from the Vietnam conflict through to Africa and Latin America, culminating in proclamations of “Afro-Asian solidarity.”⁷⁹ Prominent national and local leaders were asked to participate and, as before, the media was told to cover the events closely, circulating stories about the events in their wake.

Owing to this comprehensive media coverage, not long after the events state publishers produced a pictorial collection entitled *The People of Vietnam Will Triumph! U.S. Aggressors Will be Defeated!*⁸⁰ The glossy album contained several photos of the Beijing theatre to the February 1965 rallies, including a shot of Chairman Mao’s address to the crowd at Tiananmen,

⁷⁷ Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Qingzhu Yuenan nanfang minzu jiefang zhenxian chengli si zhounian dahui jihua [Plans for the Mass Rally Celebrating the 4th Anniversary of the Founding of the National Liberation Front of Southern Vietnam],” undated, SMA, C36-2-52, 7.

⁷⁸ Shaanxisheng Ji Xi’anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi’an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], “Guanyu Xi’an gejie renmin fandui Meiguo tiaoxin, zhiyuan Yuenan de youxing shiwei de qingshi baogao [Report Regarding Instructions for the Xi’an People’s Protest Demonstrations in Opposition to American Provocations and in Support of Vietnam],” February 8, 1965, SXPA, 196-2-020, 23.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸⁰ See *The People of Vietnam Will Triumph! U.S. Aggressors Will be Defeated!*, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965).

and another of the adoring audience there to catch his words. Other photos captured additional Beijing venues of the event, including a rally of workers and office employees of the Shihchingshan Iron and Steel Works, a small parade by a militia unit of the Sino-Vietnamese Friendship People's Commune, and demonstrations by members of the PLA, Chinese students, and Vietnamese exchange students. Following these pages were several photographs capturing the crowds at simultaneous protests in Shanghai, Chongqing in the southwest, and Shenyang in the northeast. The collection then seamlessly transitioned into a selection of pictures from protests against the Vietnam conflict from around the world – Korea, Albania, Indonesia, Japan, Algeria, Cuba, Pakistan, Mali, France, Columbia, Uruguay, and the United Kingdom. The global community of ordinary people opposed to U.S. actions in Vietnam was vast, this photo collection suggested, and so too were the broad Chinese masses united in common cause all across the PRC. The Chinese people had allies in one another; further still, they had allies around the world – and this global community had history on its side.

The ensuing several months were peppered with rallies, protests, and demonstrations pertaining to a variety of elements concerning the war in Vietnam. In the case of Shanghai alone, an event in March was followed by three mass rallies in May integrated into the city's annual (and already popular) festival 'Shanghai Spring.'⁸¹ According to statistics compiled by the Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, between August 1964 and May 1965 the city hosted six "large-scale" events drawing over 64,000 participants.⁸² Additionally, many of Shanghai's district-level propaganda departments held "small-scale" multi-day rallies throughout

⁸¹ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Shanghaishi qunzhongxing yuan Yue kang Mei zhezhong tongji shuzi (cong 1964 nian bayue zhi 1965 nian wuyue ershiri) [Statistical Figures Regarding Shanghai's Mass 'Support Vietnam, Resist America' Campaign (August 1964 to May 20, 1965)]," undated, SMA, A22-2-1295, 99.

⁸² Ibid., 100.

this same period, pulling a total of 5.4 million people into their midst.⁸³ Since August 1964, the report details, Shanghai radio coverage included 17 episodes featuring sound bites from mass events around the city, as well as 6 special broadcasts featuring live coverage of large-scale rallies. This period also saw 5 incidences of specialized television broadcasts on the city's local stations, dedicated to on-the-scene coverage of the major rallies and protests. As these statistics – and the meticulous *archiving* of these statistics – demonstrate, therefore, is how mass Vietnam events in Shanghai and across the PRC were well-planned and extremely useful tools of propaganda; tools through which the Party could advance its argument about the world and offer ordinary Chinese people a unique and comforting place within it.

Though the period from August 1964 through February 1965 was the high tide of Vietnam events in the PRC, large-scale rallies continued to occur into the early Cultural Revolution. In July 1965, a massive 700,000 crowd gathered at Tiananmen Square for a rally attended by most of the Party leadership and 'foreign friends' from a wide swath of the Third World.⁸⁴ Even mass events not ostensibly about Vietnam were colored by the dominating power of the conflict as a propaganda trope. That December, the nationwide celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the December 9, 1935 student protests, were also heavily tinged with a focus on events in Vietnam.⁸⁵

In its report on preparations for the Beijing celebrations, the Central Communist Youth League discussed forthcoming editorials in *Chinese Youth News (Zhongguo Qingnianbao)*, instructing young readers and students to interpret the anniversary in the context of the current international situation, considering the struggle of "the oppressed peoples of the world" against

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ See Scarlett, "China After the Sino-Soviet Split," 100.

⁸⁵ On December 9, 1935, Chinese students launched a mass protest in Beijing (then called Beiping) to insist that the Chinese government more actively resist Japanese aggression.

American imperialism and its “running dogs.”⁸⁶ “With a footing in the domestic,” the editorials were to argue, Chinese youngsters should “promote the patriotic, anti-imperialist struggle of their student counterparts across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.”⁸⁷ When the December 9 anniversary celebrations commenced, therefore, participating students had Vietnam firmly in mind. A student drama troupe from Tsinghua University even crafted and performed its own meta-narrative, dramatic play about a spontaneous Chinese student protest against U.S. actions in Vietnam.⁸⁸ Deploying over 120 amateur student actors, the play entitled *Support the World’s People’s Anti-American Struggle*, is a testament to how internationalist mass events offered ordinary Chinese people a role to play on the frontlines of world revolution – a role so clear and identifiable that *it itself* was dramatized and celebrated as an important part of the actual guerilla fight in Vietnam.

As Chinese youngsters began to play out this role during China’s Cultural Revolution, kicked off midway through 1966, events in Vietnam would continue to play an important role in their mobilization. When the U.S. expanded its bombing efforts in North Vietnam and directly targeted Hanoi and Haiphong in late June that year, the Chinese Foreign Ministry seized the opportunity to call for mass rallies across the PRC. On the recommendation of Deng Xiaoping, the Foreign Ministry sought a major rally to be held in Beijing, with similar events in eight major

⁸⁶ Gongqingtuan Zhongyang Shujichu [Secretariat of the Communist Youth League Central Committee], “Guanyu jinian ‘yi’er-jiu’ xuesheng yundong sanshi zhounian de qingshi baogao [Report Requesting Instructions Regarding Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the ‘12-9’ Student Movement],” October 18, 1965, BMA, 100-001-00948, 21.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Qinghua Daxue Xuesheng Yanchu [Qinghua University Student Performances], “Gewu ‘zhiyuan shijie renmin fanMei douzheng’ shuoming [Description of the Musical “Support the World’s People’s Struggle Against the U.S.”],” (sic) November 1965, BMA, 100-003-01581, 78-80.

cities across the country as well as corresponding gatherings throughout the three southern provinces and autonomous regions bordering Vietnam – Guangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan.⁸⁹

The Shanghai event brought out many high-ranking city leaders and popular organizations alike. In his opening address, vice-mayor of Shanghai and head of the Shanghai Committee to Safeguard World Peace, Jin Zhonghua invoked the crowd of “over ten thousand Shanghainese, from all walks of life” gathered to “angrily denounce” the “heinous acts” of these American bombings.⁹⁰ A speaker at another Shanghai rally a few days later pursued the same tactic, informing the crowd how “the ten million people of Shanghai” all “ardently support Chairman Ho Chi Minh’s declaration of war.”⁹¹ The ensuing speaker expanded his scope, pronouncing the “700 million Chinese people” to be the “firm backup force” of the Vietnamese people.⁹² If China and the world revolutionary community had strength in numbers, the CCP found strength in *citing* these numbers. It was important, Party leaders and propagandists shrewdly surmised, to remind the Chinese crowds of their own size, of the size of their nation beyond what their eyes could see before them, and of the endless size of the global community of which they were to imagine themselves a part. Vietnam offered the most tangible internationalist trope at the Party’s disposal, but it would only be one piece of the conceptual global puzzle the CCP was completing for their domestic constituency.

⁸⁹ Waijiaobu [Central Ministry of Foreign Affairs], “Guanyu jiu Meiji hongzha Henei, Haifang Yuefang ji ‘qierling’ (Rineiwa xieyi qianding shi’ er zhounian) huodong de qingshi [Request for Instructions Regarding Activities About the U.S. Bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong and in Support of Vietnam’s ‘7-20’ (The 20th Anniversary of the Signing of the Geneva Accords)],” July 4, 1966, SXP, 196-1-258, 106.

⁹⁰ Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Jin Zhonghua tongzhi zhi kaihui ci [Comrade Jin Zhonghua’s Opening Address],” July 11, 1966, SMA, C36-2-56, 9-10.

⁹¹ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Kaimu ci [Opening Address],” SMA, A22-2-1396, 27.

⁹² Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Zai Shanghai gejie renmin zhichi Yuenan renmin kangMei jiuguo douzheng dahuishang de jianghua [Speech at the Shanghai People’s Mass Rally in Support of the Vietnamese People’s Patriotic Struggle Against the U.S.],” undated, *Ibid.*, 31.

In his analysis of the Vietnam-themed mass events of China's 1960s, Zachary Scarlett argues they served a different purpose from other internationalist large-scale rallies. Given the cultural familiarity of Vietnam, its geographic proximity to the PRC, and the tangible threat of the war spilling into China, he argues, Vietnam was unique among the "global narratives" the Party issued during this period.⁹³ Moreover, Scarlett suggests, the escalation of the conflict there from 1964-65 lent itself perfectly to the militarization of everyday life ongoing in China as Mao steered the country toward the Cultural Revolution. All of these points are well taken. Indeed, Vietnam did occupy an important and distinct role in the PRC's internationalist mass events – and the deployment of *domestic internationalism* more broadly – during the 1960s. No other event could offer the same tangible and mobilizing 'war scare' to the PRC during these years.

And yet, reading the Vietnam trope in 1960s PRC propaganda for the ways in which it is distinct from the other global events championed by Beijing risks ignoring the larger set of ideas advanced by the collective set of these internationalist themes; so too does placing under the microscope only the moments of escalating U.S. presence in Vietnam throughout 1964-65. Chinese propaganda's instrumentalization of Vietnam – and events there following the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Incident – was only one piece of a larger argument being advanced to secure popular political mobilization at home. This argument extended well beyond anti-Americanism, anti-Soviet revisionism, Chinese national security, and solidarity between socialist allies in Asia. This was an argument about sovereignty, about postcolonial development, about modernization, and about race; it was an idea about a global community, led by China, walking the same dignified path to modernity. While Vietnam went a long way toward advancing this idea, it is only when we look beyond the Vietnam war – indeed beyond Asia – that we begin to

⁹³ Scarlett, "China After the Sino-Soviet Split," 122-126.

see the full vision Beijing was laying out for the future of all oppressed peoples seemingly forgotten by time and history.

Beyond Beijing's Backyard: Imagining Third World Solidarity

Alongside specialized internationalist mass events commissioned in response to U.S. actions in Vietnam, the CCP orchestrated an array of other mass gatherings designed to shape popular Chinese imaginations of a vast global community beyond their shores. With the Sino-Soviet split public knowledge by 1963, the PRC was no longer inhibited by the restrictive confines of merely promoting 'socialist solidarity.' CCP leaders could now more freely promote the ideas of Third World solidarity and postcolonial development they had long held dear since (and even well before) the seminal Bandung Conference in 1955.⁹⁴ At a 1963 mass event in Beijing commemorating the 8th anniversary of Bandung, for example, one speaker told the audience (which included many foreign students from Third World countries) about the "excuses" of "so-called 'foreign aid'" which the U.S. uses to interfere with a country's "internal affairs."⁹⁵ The speech moved from Asia to Africa to Latin America, lauding the "flourishing development of national liberation movements" which have become "an enormous tide in today's world."⁹⁶ While the remarks were also sure to include all the familiar vilifications of the U.S. imperialists and their 'running dog' allies, the speech and the event were grounded in much larger ideas about modernity and the future of newly independent, postcolonial nations.

⁹⁴ The 1955 Bandung Conference, held in Indonesia, was a meeting of Asian and African representatives designed to help achieve unity between countries of these regions that wished to remain politically non-aligned in the Cold War.

⁹⁵ Zhongguo Gongchanzhuyi Qingniantuan Beijingshi Weiyuanhui [Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee], "Jinian Ya-Fei huiyi ba zhounian dahui chouweihui xiang dahui zuode baogao [Report by the Mass Rally Preparatory Committee on the Mass Rally to Commemorate the 8th Anniversary of the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference]," undated, BMA, 100-001-01096, 18.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 19.

In January 1964, the Party was given a perfect opportunity to expand on these ideas. On January 12, Mao Zedong issued a statement of support to the people of Panama following the so-called Martyr's Day riots over the sovereignty of the Panama Canal.⁹⁷ Linking events in Panama to struggles against "plunder and enslave[ment]" around the world, Mao's words immediately gave way to mass rallies across a number of Chinese cities.⁹⁸ In Shanghai, the Committee to Safeguard World Peace took the lead, organizing a large-scale rally in Culture Square for January 15. Jin Zhonghua and head of the Chinese Women's Federation's Shanghai chapter Guan Jian offered speeches, followed thereafter by remarks from 'foreign friends' including a Cuban trainee and a Vietnamese exchange student.⁹⁹ The day concluded with the head of the Chinese Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity reading a prepared statement on behalf of the "people of Shanghai," which condemned the "control" and "interference" the U.S. exerted over Panama's "internal affairs."¹⁰⁰ Defending Panama's "sovereign right" over the Canal there, the statement addressed the Panamanian people, telling them they were "not isolated."

Like many other major cities across China, Xi'an too held a simultaneous large-scale rally on January 15. Held in a soccer stadium in the city center, the local chapter of the Committee to Safeguard World Peace had fine-tuned the day's proceedings. The director of the China-Latin America Friendship Association opened the event with a speech, and provincial and

⁹⁷ The January 9, 1964 Martyrs' Day riots in Panama occurred when local students responded to a torn Panamanian flag in the Panama Canal Zone by trying to replace the American flag at a U.S. Government building there with a flag of Panama. Three days of fighting ensued, with 21 Panamanian civilians and 4 U.S. soldiers killed after the latter intervened to suppress the riot.

⁹⁸ Mao Tse-tung, "Statement Expressing the Chinese People's Firm Support for the Panamanian People's Just, Patriotic Struggle," (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), 2.

⁹⁹ Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Dahui chengxu [Mass Rally Program]," undated, SMA, C36-2-46, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Shanghai Gejie Renmin Zhichi Banama Renmin Fandui Meidiguo zhuyi Dahui [The Shanghai People's Rally in Support of the Panamanian People in Their Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism], "Shanghai gejie renmin zhichi Banama renmin fandui Meidiguo zhuyi douzheng dahui tongdian [Circular from the Shanghai People's Mass Rally in Support of the Panamanian People's Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism]," January 15, 1964, Ibid., 50.

municipal radio stations broadcast the rally live.¹⁰¹ Amongst the slogans fed to the massive crowd were demands to “support the Panamanian people’s recovery of the Panama Canal” and oppose the Johnson administration’s effort to “enslave” the people of the world.¹⁰² Speeches situated events in Panama within the larger history of American foreign policy and commercial dominance over Latin America and, more broadly, within Washington’s “wildly arrogant” attempt to “domineer” over the “sovereignty” of other nations.¹⁰³ In Xi’an, and around the PRC, the Panamanian riots were being presented – and interpreted – as far more than yet another vilification of American imperialism; they were about the fight of all postcolonial peoples for dignity, for sovereignty, and for the right to achieve modernity.

Party leaders in Beijing recognized the power of these ideas, and placed great importance on seizing Panama as a tool of domestic propaganda. The Central Committee instructed all local Party organs to “grasp hold of” this “significant and outstanding event,” to engage in extensive “education on internationalism” for the Chinese people.¹⁰⁴ About one week, the circular went on, should be dedicated to promoting Panama-related activities, including mass rallies, collective singing, and the performance of ‘living newspaper’ plays. Local and national media, one Xinhua News Agency internal memo reveals, should cover the mass Chinese protest demonstrations in such a way as to “reflect the indignant angry emotions of the masses.”¹⁰⁵ That way, it will

¹⁰¹ Shaanxisheng Ji Xi’anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi’an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], “Xi’an gejie renmin zhichi Banama renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi douzheng dahui jihua [Plans for the Xi’an People’s Mass Rally in Support of the Panamanian People’s Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism],” January 13, 1964, SXPA, 196-1-218, 119.

¹⁰² Ibid., 120.

¹⁰³ “Zai Xi’an dahuishang de jianghua [Speech at the Xi’an Mass Rally],” undated, Ibid., 126.

¹⁰⁴ Zhongguo Gongchandang Xi’anshi Weiyuanhui [Xi’an Municipal Party Committee], “untitled,” January 14, 1964, Ibid., 137.

¹⁰⁵ Xinhua Tongxunshe Shaanxi Fenshe [Xinhua News Agency Shaanxi Bureau] and Renmin Ribao Shaanxi Jizhezhan [People’s Daily Shaanxi Reporters Station], “Zongshe guanyu zhichi Banama renmin fanMei huodong baodaozhong ruogan wenti de tongbao [Circular from the Main Office Regarding Some Issues in the Reporting of Activities in Support of the Panamanian People Against the U.S.],” January 27, 1964, SXPA, 196-1-186, 81.

“illustrate how these protests emerge from the people’s righteous indignation.”¹⁰⁶ Reports should also “emphasize in detail the great organization of the demonstrating masses,” since “western journalists often smear our protest demonstrations as state-organized.”

As a component of the Party’s designs in using internationalist mass events as tools of propaganda, it was important that these events be understood (both internationally, as well as domestically by those participating) as spontaneous, organic outgrowths of the Chinese people themselves. Local media outlets did their best to make this case. In Xi’an, the *Xi’an Evening News* drew special attention to the size of the gathering crowds, and even published songs, poems, and drawings by popular contributors.¹⁰⁷ Alongside the *Shaanxi Daily* and in accordance with directions handed down from the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council in Beijing, the paper even reprinted letters of support to the people of Panama, written by ordinary Chinese citizens.¹⁰⁸ The ideas about the world the Party offered through mass events regarding Panama resonated with the Chinese people; these ideas were only made stronger by the perception, stoked by the CCP’s direction, that such ideas were themselves products of the people.

Not long after, in April 1964, a series of mass events were held celebrating anti-colonial efforts around the world, and especially in Latin America. Perhaps timed to coincide with Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi’s well-publicized voyage through 14 countries in Asia and Africa, the first of these events was in honor of World Youth Anti-Colonialism Day. Organized mainly by the Communist Youth League and held in Beijing, the large-scale rally featured speeches by foreign students from Vietnam and Colombia. A speech by a student from Angola discussed the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 82.

¹⁰⁷ See Xi’an Wanbao [Xi’an Evening News], “Guanyu Xi’an renmin zhichi Banama renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi de baodao [Reporting Regarding the Xi’an People’s Support of the Panamanian People’s Opposition to U.S. Imperialism],” January 14-20, 1964, SXPA, 196-1-218, 166-180.

¹⁰⁸ See Shaanxi Ribao [Shaanxi Daily], “Guanyu woshi zhichi Banama renmin fanMei aiguo douzheng de baodao [Reporting Regarding Xi’an’s Support of the Panamanian People’s Patriotic Struggle Against the U.S.],” January 15-20, 1964, Ibid., 142-162.

inherent racism of colonialism, and summoned a long history of black Africans either persecuted in their own countries or sold abroad to till cash crops through slave labor.¹⁰⁹ Horrifying tales of colonial and neocolonial oppression notwithstanding, the event's culminating statement painted a positive portrait – one of “a great international situation” with the “destiny” of Chinese youth tied together with that of their counterparts across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.¹¹⁰ Together, Chinese youngsters and young people across the Third World would “defend national independence” and “safeguard world peace.”

This notion of tied fates and shared principles across the Third World was again summoned later that month in events commemorating the Cuban revolution and the “Latin American struggle” more broadly. The State Council's Foreign Affairs Office called for the Committee to Safeguard World Peace to organize large-scale rallies in major cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenyang, and Xi'an.¹¹¹ While it was common to invite a host of ‘foreign friends’ to attend and serve as corroboration for their claims about the world, for this event Party leaders were particularly interested in inviting several members of revolutionary groups from Cuba, Venezuela, and Peru who were already touring the PRC at the time.¹¹² Accordingly, planning documents indicate that these events should celebrate the Cuban revolution, while also pledging support for ongoing struggles in Venezuela and Panama. Not insignificantly, the State Council also requested that local events “combine together the anti-American struggle along with support for the Latin American revolutionary struggle,” such that

¹⁰⁹ Zhongguo Gongchanzhuyi Qingniantuan Beijingshi Weiyuanhui [Communist Youth League Beijing Municipal Committee], “Zai shoudu gejie qingnian jinian siyue ershisi ri fanzhiminzhuoyiri dahuishang Angela qingnian falu gongzuozhe Xijiluo-Bodeluo-Gemaisi de jianghua [Speech by Angolan Legal Worker Xijiluo-Bodeluo-Gemaisi at Beijing's Mass Youth Rally in Commemoration of April 24, Anti-Colonialism Day],” undated, BMA, 100-001-01099, 20.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 19.

¹¹¹ Heda Dangzu [Central Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Party Group], “Guanyu juxing zhichi Guba he Ladingmeizhou renmin douzheng xun shi de qingshi baogao [Report Regarding Holding Events in Support of Cuba and the Latin American People's Struggle],” March 6, 1964, SXPA, 196-1-185, 13-14.

¹¹² Ibid., 14.

it then shows how Soviet “modern revisionism effectively promotes and encourages imperialism in Latin America by seeking peaceful coexistence” with the U.S.¹¹³ As threats of revisionism at home in the PRC would mount in the lead-up to the Cultural Revolution, such notions went a long way toward discursively and conceptually linking the world revolutionary struggle and those seeking to restore capitalism in the PRC.

The ensuing local mass events aimed to further deepen the postcolonial ideational bedrock of the world revolutionary community. At one mass rally in Shanghai, a Cuban representative spoke, rhetorically asking: “What future does opposing the revolution offer the Cuban youth?...What future does opposing the revolution offer black people.”¹¹⁴ This latter question he answered: “The only future it offers is one of discrimination, hunger, and ignorance.” He went on to say this was no future at all, but rather a haunting reminder of Cuba’s past – or, he clarified, of America’s present, in which American blacks suffer currently from “brutal discrimination” unable to obtain “even the most basic rights.” Women too would suffer without the revolution, he declared, and be compelled to return to an oppressive and exploitative system.

As this speech, and the many others like it performed across the PRC made clear, the revolution – and the world revolutionary community more broadly – stood for far more than a simple anti-Americanism. The revolution offered the prospect of sovereignty, of equality, of morality and, most of all, of dignity. These notions were all on display that August, when synchronized mass discussion forums were held in commemoration of the one-year anniversary of Mao’s statement on the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Though not a struggle for national liberation in a Third World setting, the African-American campaign against *de jure* and *de facto*

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Guba daibiao geming weiyuanhui daibiao zai Shanghai qunzhong dahuishang de jianghua [Speech by a Representative of the Cuban Representative Revolutionary Committee at the Shanghai Mass Rally],” undated, SMA, C36-2-47, 42.

racial inequality in the U.S., seemed to many around the world to be incontrovertible proof of a deep-seated American racism that colored its foreign and domestic policy alike. In his August 1963 statement, Mao referred to African-Americans as “enslaved, oppressed and discriminated against,” before detailing their lack of voting rights, arbitrary incarceration, and segregation from white society.¹¹⁵ America, it appeared, was no different than European colonialists of the past. Such a notion was not difficult for many in recently decolonized nations across the Third World, nor for a domestic Chinese audience, to digest and accept.

Mao’s 1963 statement had also made reference to the “250,000 people” in the U.S. poised to take part on the famed March on Washington.¹¹⁶ He then went on to remind readers that “we are in the majority and [America and its allies] are in the minority.” “At most,” he calculated, “they make up less than 10 per cent of the 3 [billion] population of the world.”¹¹⁷ The numbers mattered to Mao, as he and top Party leaders were determined to convince a Chinese audience that they were part of something larger – a burgeoning community, on the right side of history, with the world turning in their direction. Accordingly, the August 1964 one-year commemoration of Mao’s statement was a chance to get these Chinese crowds out to stoke and embrace their perception of being part of a movement.

In response to a request from the Central Committee Foreign Affairs small group, 10 major cities across the PRC held group discussion forums, where people could study and dialogue about the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. For four day between August 8 and 12, demographically arranged mass groups including those organizing workers, youth, and women,

¹¹⁵ Mao Tse-tung, “Statement Calling on the People of the World to Unite to Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism and Support the American Negroes in their Struggle Against Racial Discrimination,” in *Statements by Mao Tse-Tung – Calling on the People of the World to Unite to Oppose the Aggressive and Bellicose Policies of U.S. Imperialism and Defend World Peace*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), 1-6.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

as well as schools and factories would hold these group forums, where speeches would be followed by a chance for participants to exchange their ideas. Amongst the topics the small group outlined to discuss were: the connection between American racism and U.S. foreign policy, the lack of support ‘modern revisionists’ offer to the Civil Rights Movement, the right of African-Americans to “defend themselves with armed force,” and the world community’s unity behind their just struggle.¹¹⁸

In Xi’an, these discussion groups were to be covered extensively by the local press, including newspapers, radio, and television broadcasts.¹¹⁹ The Shanghai iteration of these events saw discussion groups held at the city’s two most prominent universities – Fudan and Jiaotong.¹²⁰ In addition to students, workers were heavily targeted with these events, and discussions were organized at well-known work units including the Shanghai Machine Tools Factory and the Number Two Chinese Cotton Factory. The August 1964 discussion groups on the Civil Rights Movement, and the arguments they put forth linking race, (neo-) colonial oppression, the pursuit of modernity, would pave the way for major, nationwide events later that year, when the Congo firmly entered the Chinese global imaginary.

Events transpiring in the Congo were first brought to bear on domestic China in November 1964, when Mao issued a statement in support of the guerilla movement emerging there. After U.S. and Belgian troops intervened in the Congo to suppress these leftist guerilla

¹¹⁸ See Shaanxisheng Ji Xi’anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi’an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], “Guanyu zhichi Meiguo heiren douzheng, jinian Mao zhuxi zhichi Meiguo heiren fandui zhongzu qishi douzheng de shengming yi zhounian de xuanchuan yaodian [Main Points for Propaganda Regarding Supporting the Struggle of African-American and Commemorating Chairman Mao’s Statement on the Struggle of African-Americans Against Racism],” August 6, 1964, SXP, 196-1-218, 111.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 110.

¹²⁰ See Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Zhichi Meiguo heiren douzheng, jinian Mao zhuxi zhichi Meiguo heiren fandui zhongzu qishi douzheng shengming fabiao yi zhounian zuotanhui [Forum in Support of the Struggle of African-American and in Commemoration of the 1st Anniversary of Chairman Mao’s Statement on the Struggle of African-Americans Against Racism],” SMA, A22-2-1197, 23.

efforts, Mao's statement of November 28 pledged to the Congolese people they were "not alone."¹²¹ "All the Chinese people are with you," Mao promised, and he called on "people all over the world" to "advance wave upon wave." A day later Chinese crowds came out in droves all across the country. At the central mass rally in Beijing, top leaders including Mao, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Dong Biwu, and Deng Xiaoping greeted the 700,000 people gathered at Tiananmen. Over three days of events in Beijing, a pamphlet subsequently published eagerly reported, over 2.2 million people participated in demonstrations throughout the capital.¹²²

Two days later, on December 1, a mass rally in Shanghai's People's Square drew over 100,000 people. Though the Committee to Safeguard World Peace took the lead in organizing the event, the rally also drew upon participation by a host of other groups including the Sino-African Friendship Committee and the Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity. Speeches there also highlighted the size of the crowds and the "650 million Chinese people" more broadly, while also listing off the myriad countries across Africa that had condemned western actions in the Congo.¹²³ Remarks were followed by a number of artistic performances by local drama troupes, including 'living newspaper' skits bearing titles such as *At Lumumba's Headstone* and *Fury of the Congo*.¹²⁴ Events in Xi'an were no less elaborate.

Planning documents indicate that the Party leadership in Beijing had requested that major cities like Xi'an organize events throughout the November 30-December 3 period. They

¹²¹ Mao Tse-tung, "The Statement of Chairman Mao Tse-tung in Support of the People of the Congo (Leopoldville) Against U.S. Aggression," in *In Support of the People of the Congo (Leopoldville) Against U.S. Aggression*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 2.

¹²² "Editor's Note," in *Ibid.*, 24-25.

¹²³ Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People's Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Zhiyuan Gangguo (Li) renmin fandui Mei, Bidiguo zhuyi qinlüe douzheng dahui jianghuagao [Draft of Speech at the Mass Rally in Support of the Congolese (Leopoldville) People's Struggle Against the U.S. and Belgian Imperialist Invasion]," November 30, 1964, SMA, C36-2-51, 8-9.

¹²⁴ Shanghaishi Wenhua ju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Shanghai wenyijie zhichi Gangguo (Li) renmin fandui Mei-Bi qinlüe douzheng xuanchuan yanchu (yanchu chengxudan) 12/1/1964 shangwu jiushi [Shanghai Artistic Propaganda Performances in Support of the Congolese (Leopoldville) People's Struggle Against the U.S. and Belgian Invasion (Performance Program), December 1, 1964, 9AM]," undated, SMA, B172-5-839, 3.

specifically requested one major mass rally drawing in at least 20-30,000 participants, and mass demonstrations held each day to summon about 100-300,000 citizens.¹²⁵ In his opening speech commencing the rally, Shaanxi Provincial Worker's Committee head Liu Wenwei invoked the crowd of "Xi'an people from all walks of life," and linked this crowd with "all people around the world seeking liberation" who must "unite together."¹²⁶ A collection of foreigners, including one visiting Albanian guest and a collection of students living in Xi'an were invited to attend and were made specific reference to in Liu's remarks. If mass crowds were important to helping a Chinese audience believe they had strength in numbers beyond their immediate city and province, foreign faces were critical in suggesting the *transnational* existence of this community beyond the PRC's borders.

This domestic function of 'foreign friends' worked alongside Party efforts to promote the Congo rallies well after they transpired. In a pamphlet state-published in early 1965 containing reprints of the official PRC statement and Mao's remarks on the Congo, the booklet contained speeches from the Beijing rally and photos of demonstrations from cities including Guangzhou to the far south and Kunming tucked away in the distant southwest. The country was united in its outrage at western actions in Africa, and the Chinese people were doing their part as members of the transnational movement defending the world's oppressed. Not long after the Congo rallies, and amidst the steady mass Chinese events pertaining to Vietnam, U.S. actions in Latin America would offer yet another chance for the CCP to get Chinese people back into the streets.

¹²⁵ See Shaanxisheng Ji Xi'anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], "Guanyu Xi'an gejie renmin zhichi Gangguo (Li) renmin fandui Mei, Bidiguo zhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe douzheng dahui ji youxingshiwei de qinghsi baogao [Report Regarding the Xi'an People's Mass Rally and Protest Demonstration in Support of the Congolese (Leopoldville) People's Struggle Against the U.S. and Belgian Imperialist Armed Invasion]," November 30, 1964, SXPA, 196-1-218, 85.

¹²⁶ Liu Wenwei, "Kaimu ci [Opening Address]," December 1, 1964, *Ibid.*, 102-103.

After the U.S. intervened militarily in the Dominican Republic to prevent a coup from displacing the Reid Cabral regime they backed there in late April 1965, the PRC was quick to respond. On May 3, Beijing issued a statement denouncing the U.S.'s "barbarous interfere[nce] in [Dominican] internal affairs, and pledging the support of the "650 million Chinese people" for the "three million and more Dominican people [who] are by no means alone in their patriotic anti-U.S. struggle."¹²⁷ Indeed, the statement went on to link events there with the struggles waged by others in Latin America, by those in the socialist camp, by the "heroic Vietnamese people," by others in Asia, by the "Arab people" struggling against Israel, and by all peoples across Africa.¹²⁸ As Mao was preparing his own statement on the Dominican Republic, so too the Party was making arrangements for mass events across China to accompany the Chairman's words.

On May 12, Mao issued his statement, lauding the "heroic Dominican people" who have "aroused a new wave" against the U.S. and its façade of "defending freedom" whilst it "trample[s] their sovereignty underfoot."¹²⁹ That same day, mass rallies and protest demonstrations were touched off across ten major Chinese cities – Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an among them. Offering the appearance of organic spontaneity, these events were anything but. Indeed, in the days before May 12, both the Foreign Ministry and the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council issued circulars stating their "suggestions" and "opinions" about organizing

¹²⁷ "Statement of the Government of the People's Republic of China: Opposing U.S. Armed Aggression Against the Dominican Republic," in *Support the Dominican People's Resistance to U.S. Armed Aggression*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 5-7.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁹ "Mao Tse-tung's Statement Supporting the Dominican People's Resistance to U.S. Armed Aggression," in *Ibid.*, 1-4.

mass events focused on the Dominican struggle.¹³⁰ These events were to take place for several days between May 12 and 20, with Beijing kicking things off.

On May 12, a massive rally in the capital featured a speech by its mayor (and prominent Central Committee member) Peng Zhen. As a pamphlet later published proudly recounted, over 100,000 people attended the initial Beijing rally.¹³¹ Peng's speech first sought to emphasize the regional community of Beijing, invoking "we people of all circles of the capital" and pledging their unified support for the people of the Dominican Republic.¹³² He then broadened his scope, referencing "the Chinese people" and their firm endorsement of the Mao and PRC statements. After delving into the villainous actions of the U.S. in the Dominican Republic and Latin America beyond, Peng linked recent events there with Vietnam and the Congo. He then concluded his remarks by expanding the imagined revolutionary community to its widest margins yet, discussing how "the people of the world" whose unity will further grow to encompass "all the forces that can be united" to form a "broad anti-U.S. united front."¹³³ History was turning in their favor, Peng suggested, and the "heyday" and "old dream" of American hegemony was waning and would "never come true." Drawing on Peng's speech and the Beijing mass rally beyond it, events in Shanghai would do their part to implant the Dominican Republic (and its larger meaning) in the minds of the people there.

The Shanghai events would include a mass rally on May 14, followed by a large-scale protest demonstration the next day. The rally took place in the city's central People's Square,

¹³⁰ See Shaanxisheng Ji Xi'anshi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], "Guanyu zai Xi'an zuzhi qunzhong dahui he youxingshiwei zhichi Duominijia renmin fanMei douzheng de qingshi [Request for Instructions Regarding Xi'an's Organization of the Mass Rally and Protest Demonstration in Support of the People of the Dominican Republic in Their Anti-American Struggle]," May 12, 1965, SXPA, 196-1-255, 120.

¹³¹ "Editor's Note," in *Support the Dominican People's Resistance to U.S. Armed Aggression*, 34.

¹³² "Speech at Peking People's Rally Supporting the Dominican People's Resistance to U.S. Imperialist Armed Aggression," in *Ibid.*, 8.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

and gathered over 100,000 attendees, benefitting from its being fitted alongside the prearranged “Shanghai Spring” festival. A number of foreign friends were invited to attend, with representation from North Korea, North Vietnam, Romania, Uganda, Zanzibar, the Congo, and Sudan, amongst others.¹³⁴ After an opening address by Jin Zhonghua and remarks by Cao Diqu, several of these foreigners addressed the crowd themselves. Speakers from Vietnam, Sudan, and Uganda, one after another, discursively and conceptually linked the Dominican people’s struggle to other events transpiring around the world. While the Vietnam and Congolese struggles continued to be referenced, they also summoned past and ongoing battles for liberation in Cuba, Algeria, and Palestine.¹³⁵ The Ugandan speaker positioned American intervention in the Dominican Republic within the longer expanse of the colonial subjugation of Latin America by Spain, Portugal, Britain, and now the U.S.¹³⁶ In the wake of the stirring rally, the following day’s mass protests drew upon over 200,000 people. Keeping the Dominican situation firmly in the Shanghainese mind, the city had planned for twenty pre-approved slogans to hang from major buildings and across popular intersections throughout the ensuing week.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ See Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Waibin shang zhuxitai mingdan [List of Foreign Guests Seated on the Platform],” undated, SMA, C36-2-53, 7.

¹³⁵ See Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Yuenan nanfang qingnian jiefang lianhe daibiaotuan tuanzhang Ruan Wen’an zai Shanghai gejie renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahuishang de jianghuagao [Draft of Speech by Southern Vietnamese Youth Liberation Representative Group Leader Ruan Wen’an at the Shanghai People’s Mass Rally Against the U.S. Imperialist Armed Invasion],” undated, Ibid., 14-15, Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “Sudan gonghui daibiaotuan tuanzhang Muhanmode-Hasang-Muhanmode zai Shanghai gejie renmin fandui Meidiguozhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahuishang de jianghuagao [Draft of Speech by Sudanese Worker’s Representative Group Leader Muhanmode-Hasang-Muhanmode at the Shanghai People’s Mass Rally Against the U.S. Imperialist Armed Invasion],” undated, Ibid., 17-18, Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “untitled,” undated, Ibid., 20-21.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹³⁷ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Waishi Xiaozu [Shanghai Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Small Group] and Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “untitled,” May 12, 1965, Ibid., 2.

Xi'an followed closely in the wake of the Beijing and Shanghai events. Its mass rally was held on May 15, and amassed some 20,000 people at Xi'an Stadium.¹³⁸ Perhaps owing to the stadium's smaller capacity relative to its counterparts in Beijing and Shanghai, Xi'an elected to organize its mass protest demonstration to run simultaneously with the rally. The protest called for over 200,000 participants, and ran from 9AM that morning through to 8PM that evening.¹³⁹ While the protest marched on, speeches at the rally regularly invoked the crowd of "Xi'an people from all walks of life."¹⁴⁰ One speech told the crowd that events in the Dominican Republic make an already promising international situation that much better, by offering support to the Vietnamese struggle and indeed to all revolutionary struggles around the world.¹⁴¹ The speech even went on to forge a connection between the Dominican people's efforts and China's recent (second) detonation of a nuclear device, painting both events as part of a larger trend weakening the U.S. and safeguarding world peace.

Planners of the Xi'an events in the Foreign Affairs Office of the municipal Party Standing Committee had sketched out specific instructions for media coverage of the gatherings. Local newspapers including the *Shaanxi Daily* and the *Xi'an Evening News* should not only report on the mass rally and protest demonstrations and print pictures from the events, but they should also cover the mass events transpiring in Beijing and other cities across the country.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ See Shaanxisheng Ji Xi'an shi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], "Guanyu Xi'an gejie renmin zhichi Duominijia renmin fandui Meidiguo zhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahui he youxingshiwei jihua [Plans Regarding the Xi'an People's Mass Rally and Protest Demonstration in Support of the People of the Dominican Republic Against the U.S. Imperialist Armed Invasion]," May 13, 1965, SXPA, 196-1-255, 122.

¹³⁹ See *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁴⁰ See "Zai Xi'an gejie renmin zhichi Duominijia renmin fandui Meidiguo zhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahuishang de jianghua [Speech at the Xi'an People's Mass Rally in Support of the People of the Dominican Republic Against the U.S. Imperialist Armed Invasion]," undated, *Ibid.*, 126-133.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁴² See Shaanxisheng Ji Xi'an shi Renmin Weiyuanhui Waishi Bangongshi [Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Foreign Affairs Office], "Guanyu Xi'an gejie renmin zhichi Duominijia renmin fandui Meidiguo zhuyi wuzhuang qinlüe dahui he youxing shiwei jihua [Plans Regarding the Xi'an People's Mass Rally

Just as the Party wanted to bring ordinary Chinese people out into their city's streets to do locally something which held global importance, these people also needed to know this was happening all across the country; if they could first imagine themselves part of a national phenomenon, they could thereafter more easily perceive themselves part of a *transnational* movement of global proportions.

It was with precisely this goal in mind that the Party had published a specialized pamphlet on the Chinese response to the Dominican intervention. Emerging shortly after the May 1965 mass events, the small booklet included the two PRC and Mao statements, Peng Zhen's speech at the Beijing rally, and two *People's Daily* editorials. Betraying their interest in having the Dominican Republic stand-in for Latin America more broadly, the compendium also included a six-page insert titled "U.S. Political Intervention and Armed Subversion in Latin America," which detailed in chart form U.S. transgressions there from late 1948 through 1964, implicating nearly twenty countries from the region.¹⁴³ Most compelling, however, for the Party's argument about a groundswell of organic, spontaneous and popular Chinese outpouring for the Dominican people, was the eight-photo spread featuring still shots of the mass PRC events of that May. Opening with a shot of Peng Zhen speaking in Beijing alongside the Party leadership and facing what the caption describes as a "mammoth mass rally," the spread also depicted the large crowds gathered in Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenyang. Four photos also captured various crowds across Beijing, one identified as comprised of "minority nationalities," and another a panoramic shot of the immense crowd attending the rally at Worker's Stadium.

and Protest Demonstration in Support of the People of the Dominican Republic Against the U.S. Imperialist Armed Invasion],” May 13, 1965, *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁴³ See “U.S. Political Intervention and Armed Subversion in Latin America,” in *Support the Dominican People's Resistance to U.S. Armed Aggression*, 27-32.

Such pamphlets effectively allowed internationalist mass events to remain in the Chinese consciousness long after the event itself had finished. If they prolonged its moment, they also expanded its reach, allowing those outside major urban centers to experience vicariously the surging movement that had so stirred their compatriots into action. They too, the photos and articles told them, were a part of the broad, Chinese masses coming to the aid and support of the world's oppressed peoples. They were part of the Chinese community of revolutionaries, which was itself part of the *global* community defending the world from those seeking to exploit it to their exclusive gain. This transnational family had strength in numbers. No longer would sovereignty and political independence be trampled upon; these countries would now be free to pursue their postcolonial destiny and advance toward modernity. National development was a project with global ramifications, and China's gain was to the benefit of postcolonial peoples across the world.

Conclusion

The internationalist mass event was an important, likely critical, component of the Party's effort to instrumentalize internationalism in China's 1960s. The mass gathering – and especially the holiday-inspired festival – had been an important part of PRC political culture since the inception of the regime in 1949. When the challenges of the late 1950s and early 1960s compelled the Party to seek a strengthening of its own influence and political legitimacy at home in the PRC, therefore, mass events were an avenue ripe to be imbued with internationalist tropes. The captive and captivated audience these large-scale gatherings promised, offered the CCP a perfect opportunity to make its case about the world, and China's unparalleled role within it.

Several national holidays already dotted the PRC calendar, and major events like National Day and Worker's Day each gave the Party several days to wax about the world. Accordingly, these and other holiday periods were infused with speeches and artistic performances highlighting ongoing struggles like those of Vietnam and the Congo, and celebrating Third World revolution and postcolonial development more generally. Merging together tradition and internationalism, national holidays became an important place for Chinese people to interpret themselves part of a larger community (both within, and beyond, China) in support of a host of global causes.

Where national holidays offered traces of internationalism, specialized mass events organized around a particular global cause, were internationalist through-and-through. Such gatherings – in recognition of the escalating conflict in Vietnam, to condemn U.S. actions in Panama, the Congo, and the Dominican Republic, or championing the African-American Civil Rights Movement – were concentrated, highly choreographed rallies and protest demonstrations designed to spur Chinese audiences to feel part of a movement larger than themselves, and even China. Far more so than holiday celebrations, specialized mass events gave the appearance of being driven by the will of the people themselves – an ostensibly organic creation of their anger and enthusiasm.

Internationalist mass events drew upon perceptions of shared space, shared cause, and shared time. Participants felt connected to their neighbor in the crowd, to their countryman across the PRC, and to their allies and friends carrying out the struggle in faraway lands (though often embodied by the foreign faces almost always in attendance). If the crowd at the event gave the sense of a movement brewing, periodicals and extensive media coverage stoked this idea,

suggesting the simultaneity of mass events and allowing the idea of a unified, worldwide movement to live on well after the crowd had disbanded and daily activities were resumed.

Internationalist mass events thus offered something important to those in attendance across major Chinese cities, but also to the vast majority of PRC citizens not able to be amongst the crowds at these gatherings. It gave them the very idea of the crowd itself – the idea of a community based on shared ideals; the idea of that community existing locally, regionally, nationally, globally. As the 1960s would progress and internationalism would become infused into everyday PRC life, ordinary Chinese people would increasingly begin to feel ensconced in this imagined global community. As they learned of China's *leading* role within this community, the stakes of their own actions would begin to rise. If this world revolutionary community was going to thrive, China needed to thrive; if China was going to thrive, all Chinese people needed to play their part. The line between the local and the global was being blurred; internationalism was doing its job.

Chapter 3: A World in Their Own Image:
Audio-Visual Internationalism Across Film, Photo, and Song, 1962-66

The Chinese photo exhibition, *American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam!*, which toured extensively across major cities and small counties of the People's Republic of China throughout the spring of 1965, would seem to be about the mounting American-Vietnamese conflict in Southeast Asia. Indeed, the presentation commences by showcasing dozens upon dozens of photos depicting the ruthless atrocities committed by American military personnel upon the helpless populations of South Vietnam and the carnage of the U.S. bombing campaign on the North. But three-quarters of the way through, the exhibition shifts its focus. The remainder of the spread is dedicated to illustrating the worldwide wave of support for the Vietnamese people, including photos of foreign leaders and popular protests from countries like Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, France, and even the U.S. itself. These images from around the world comprise a minority in this fourth section of the exhibition, however; wholly 70 percent of its 66 photos convey acts of support for Vietnam occurring in China, by Chinese people. The exhibit, to be sure, was indeed teaching its Chinese viewers about events unfolding in Vietnam. But it was also, as these final photos attest, teaching them about themselves.

This chapter looks at how the audial and the visual were summoned in service of the Chinese Communist Party's strategy of *domestic internationalism* in China's 1960s. In so doing, this section aims to move beyond the propaganda poster – in many ways, one of the lasting images of this period in PRC history. Though scholars of various disciplines have made excellent analytic use of these works, the fascination with the poster has, to some extent, silenced a number of other critically important audio-visual propaganda mediums of this era.¹ Focusing

¹ For a sampling of treatments covering propaganda posters from the Cultural Revolution and its preceding years, see Landsberger, *Chinese Propaganda Poster*, Cushing and Tompkins, *Chinese Posters*, Chiu and Zheng, *Art and China's Revolution*.

on documentary films, photograph exhibitions, and songs and musicals, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the diversity and intricacy of the vast collection of audio-visual mediums deployed by the Party in its effort to advance its argument about the world. Even then, of course, this chapter will be neglecting other hugely important audio-visual propaganda forms, including poems, paintings, and radio broadcasts, amongst others. Nevertheless, the three mediums here covered demonstrate well the power and utility behind the seen and the heard in China's imagining of the wider world, and this chapter thus reconstructs some critical elements of how it was that the world was folded into the sights and sounds of everyday Chinese life in the 1960s.

This chapter argues that audio-visual propaganda forms brought the world to local Chinese people in a way that greatly facilitated their imagination of the globe beyond China. As with other propaganda forms comprising *domestic internationalism*, these mediums also advanced an important argument about China's place in that wider world, a place of leadership and centrality in the world revolutionary community. These forms thus built off of (and even, at times, incorporated) internationalist mass rallies and protest demonstrations, to help construct and sustain a widespread popular Chinese idea of the world and the Sinocentric foundation upon which that image was built.

In analyzing documentary films, photo exhibitions, and songs and musicals, this chapter not only looks deep into the construction and content of these forms. It also delves into the collective popular experience of the mediums. In the case of all three, the shared experience of these works – often through mass screenings, large-scale touring exhibitions, and regular performances – greatly enhanced their power and persuasion with their target audiences. These shared experiences (much like the internationalist mass event described in Chapter 2) not only attracted audience engagement, but also implicated spectator participation effectively offering

these people a direct role to play in a struggle of worldwide scope and importance. A photo exhibition ostensibly about the struggle of the Vietnamese people, therefore, would culminate in a Chinese spectator viewing an image of a Chinese protest in a Chinese city composed of Chinese people – all of them imagining the world and their place within it. By providing the sights and sounds to fuel these dreams, audio-visual internationalist propaganda would be an important part of *domestic internationalism*, and would be critical to that strategy's role in the emergence and shaping of the eventual Cultural Revolution.

Documenting the World: Documentary Films and Shared Screenings

Documentary films (*jilupian*) and newsreel films (*xinwenpian*) had long been important to the Chinese Communist Party.² These forms were immensely helpful to the Party's effort to disseminate its message across the nation, and especially so in light of lingering illiteracy, particularly in rural areas. Production of these documentary films was a well-oiled machine in Mao's China, with a handful of state-run movie studios churning out such films at a steady clip.³ As *domestic internationalism* was poised for revamping after 1962's Tenth Plenum, documentary films were slated to play an integral part of the CCP's intention to bring the world to bear on the political needs of China's domestic revolution.

In an August 1965 report, Premier Zhou Enlai sketched out why he felt film was “the most important weapon” in the strategic use of arts and culture in service of politics.⁴ Since they

² This chapter uses the term “documentary film” to refer to both *jilupian* and *xinwenpian*, drawing a distinction between these two types of film on the one hand, and “feature films” (*meishupian*; *gushipian*) based on fictional stories on the other hand.

³ Among the most prominent of these production groups were the August 1st Film Studio (*Bayi dianying zhipianchang*), the Central News and Documentary Film Studio (*Zhongyang xinwen jilu dianying zhipianchang*), the Beijing Film Studio (*Beijing dianying zhipianchang*), and the Xi'an Film Studio (*Xi'an dianying zhipianchang*).

⁴ Zhonggong Shaanxi Shengwei Bangongting Jiyaoshi [Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee Secretariat Office of Important Affairs], “Zhou Enlai tongzhi 1965 nian ba yue shiyi ri zai wenhuabu zhaokai de dianying chuanguo ticai guihua huiyishang de baogao jilu [Record of Comrade Zhou Enlai's Report on August 11, 1965 at the

are easy to disseminate, educate the masses more easily than other forms, and inspire and extol the people so readily, Zhou held, films needed to be given greater attention moving forward. In the years before Zhou's words, however, the wheels were already in motion for documentary films playing a greater role in the Party's quest to regain popular hearts and minds in the wake of the Great Leap Forward. As part of this plan, the early-to-mid-1960s saw a flourishing of documentary films touching upon fresh internationalist themes and events.

While internationalist documentary films had existed before the 1960s, these works rarely strayed far from mainstay themes including the Taiwan issue and the PRC's friendships with close allies like North Korea. By the 1960s, however, films about events around the world and the PRC's connection to global happenings began to grow in number and evolve thematically. Designed to bring the world to the eyes and ears of Chinese audiences, these films aimed to expand popular conceptions of other peoples and nations around the world, while also putting forth a particular argument about where that world was headed. In short, it was turning in favor of progressive peoples everywhere, across national boundaries. The reactionary forces led by the U.S. were being left behind by history, and the time for those long suffering under oppression had finally come.

Advancing these ideas through documentary film involved crafting two kinds of works: those offering somewhat basic treatments of international situations designed to introduce spectators to the issue at hand, and those that delved deeper, presenting a more unabashed argument designed to convince. In both instances, however, it was not difficult to determine the Party's intentions and implicit suggestions. The myriad documentaries about the burgeoning

Department of Culture's Conference on the Guidelines of Film Creation and Subject Matter],” October 25, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-655, 122.

Third World, popping up continuously throughout the early-to-mid-1960s serve as a window in this respect.

As CCP leaders increasingly championed the broad Asian, African, Latin American world as the source and site of the progressive future in the 1960s, Chinese documentaries about these countries and people began to blossom. The first order, however, was teaching Chinese audiences about the basic history and context of these peoples' pursuit of freedom and modernity. Africa, in particular, was immensely foreign to most all PRC citizens, and the sprouting of independence across that continent in the early 1960s made it ripe for documentary coverage. Accordingly, a steady stream of films emerged, including *Horn of Africa* (1961), *Visiting Guinea* (1961), *Independent Mali* (1962), *Tanganyika: Country Beneath Equatorial Snow-Capped Mountains* (1963), *Unyielding Algeria* (1963), and *Kenya Reborn* (1964). As their titles suggest, these works aimed to introduce general information about these countries and cultures within the context of their emergence out from beneath the boot of western colonial exploitation. These pictures certainly tabled a detectable argument about a favorable international situation on the horizon and a future favorable to progressive nations including the PRC, but they did not push this agenda excessively.

As Africa – and the so-called “Afro-Asian-Latin American world” – gradually began to enter regular CCP and popular discourse about the world by the mid-1960s, documentaries followed suit. With revolutionary struggles emerging in places like Tanzania and the Congo, films captured these events with much greater specificity. Both *The Glory of the Tanzanian Military* (1964) and *The Congolese People (Leopoldville) Will Be Victorious* (1964) moved well beyond introducing the basics of these two newly independent countries, and instead promoted their guerrilla struggles of liberation amidst uncertain postcolonial conditions. While these

events were certainly presented with a continued air of confidence and certainty about the future, they brought Chinese audiences to the frontlines of the continued struggle facing many Third World nations *after* securing independence, and the challenges of the postcolonial pursuit of modernity for countries less fortunate than New China. The PRC must thus stand with these peoples, guiding them safely to the fruits of development and modernization.

By 1965, the Chinese audience was primed for the full-length documentary *Awakened Africa* (1965), produced by the Central News and Documentary Film Studio. Shot in a small handful of locations across the continent by a team of Chinese filmmakers, the film sought to combine the expository element of the straightforward Africa-based documentaries with a more focused emphasis on the armed, revolutionary struggle playing out in a handful of regions.⁵ The goal, then, was to rather deceptively portray a continent united in arms, combining realities with suggestive exaggerations. Shots of women working in newly built factories and young people attending science courses thus appear alongside guerrilla shooting practice sessions and barren lands ravaged by western colonial resource exploitation.⁶ Striking this balance was an important part of the CCP's argument about the world – the prospects for the future were bright, but the struggle was unceasing, violent, and needed everyone's commitment.

Unsurprisingly, the mounting U.S. intervention in Vietnam occupied an important place in the deployment of internationalist documentary films. Given how the PRC's commitment to North Vietnam's effort to reunify the country under communism dated back to the early 1950s, documentary coverage of events there was a mainstay. That did not prevent, however, a veritable explosion of Vietnam-themed Chinese documentary films from emerging in the early

⁵ See Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhuaabu [Central Department of Culture] et al., “Guanyu juban shuqi xuesheng dianying zhuanchang de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding Summer Holiday Student Film Special Screenings],” June 23, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-727, 14.

⁶ See *Dazhong Dianying* [*Mass Film*], 7 (1965), 9-10.

1960s, and especially after the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in August 1964. In the period before heavy American intervention in Vietnam after early 1965, works including *Vietnamese Soldiers and Civilians Fight Well*, *Unyielding Buddhists of Southern Vietnam*, and *Unbending People of Southern Vietnam*, championed the indomitable will of the Vietnamese people amidst the rising presence of American advisors and diplomats.

Once full-scale fighting began in earnest, however, Chinese films took on a much more direct focus on battlefield heroics and the heinous crimes perpetrated by the American military. These films were churned out at a breakneck pace and included titles such as: *Support the Vietnamese People Knocking Down the American Invaders*, *American Intruders*, *Get out of Vietnam*, *Strike the American Invaders*, *The American Bandits Receive Their Deserved Punishment*, and *Punish Severely the American Bandits*. In the ten months between August 1964 and May 1965 alone, a group of eight core PRC documentaries on Vietnam were viewed by over 178.5 million Chinese people, according to official estimates.⁷ As both a rallying cry for Third World liberation more broadly and to ignite a genuine (if controlled) war scare in the PRC as an aggressive U.S. military threatened its southern border, these films went a long way toward the Party's effort to bring Vietnam to the forefront of the collective Chinese mind.

Though its geographic proximity always made Vietnam stand out amidst the various internationalist causes the Party brought to bear on the Chinese population in the 1960s, it also tapped into the larger effort to paint the U.S. as the leader of a small cabal of countries preying upon the world's majority. This was precisely the theme of the large-scale documentary *Collective Enemy of the World's People*, which appeared in April 1964 and gained widespread

⁷ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], "Tongchou difen, dadao Meidiguo zhuyi - Zhongguo renmin yuan Yue kang Mei xuanchuan zhanlan [Sharing a Bitter Hatred for a Common Enemy, Strike Down U.S. Imperialism - A Propaganda Exhibition of the Chinese People Supporting Vietnam, Resisting America]," June 24, 1965, SXPA, 196-1-254, 65.

appeal across the country. The film walks audiences through America's calculated effort to seize control and exert dominance over the world's people since the end of World War II. From its postwar occupations of Germany and Japan through to its manipulation of foreign aid and persistent interference in a country's domestic affairs, the U.S. was the enemy of postcolonial development and sovereignty. This was especially so for Third World countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, *Collective Enemy* argues. The film draws upon a host of countries to make its point, moving swiftly from Cuba, to Panama, to Vietnam, to Korea, to Japan, to Turkey, and to Iraq, amongst others. Viewers were offered an image of a vast world victimized, captured well by one reviewer,

From the Indochina peninsula to the Congolese jungle, from the Caribbean Sea to Cyprus, from Japan in the Pacific Ocean to Zanzibar at the edge of the Indian Ocean, the anti-American struggle of all the world's people is right now rolling like a furious billow rushing toward U.S. imperialism causing it to sink down lower and lower until it is surrounded on all sides.⁸

While Washington's onslaught was waged upon the world's people, the film also made clear that America was rotten from the inside out. Shots of poor, hungry children from American urban centers were juxtaposed with images of Wall Street and prominent capitalists said to be part of the 'Rockefeller clique.' An accompany guide and glossary to the film, spelled out its effort to define "American lifestyle" as "the dying stage" of American capitalism which reflects the "corruption, spiritual emptiness, moral degeneration, and development of a deformed human nature."⁹ These corrupted values come into constant conflict with the virtuous majority of the world's people, who are now finally beginning to unite in common cause.

Indeed, as one of the film's editors, Sha Dan, described his team's motivation for making *Collective Enemy*, they wanted to "offer a concrete spur to the current international struggle"

⁸ *Dazhong Dianying [Mass Film]*, 4 (1964), 12.

⁹ *Yingpian Shuomingshu [Film Manual]*, (1964) 34.

being waged in locations around the world.¹⁰ While the film was regularly screened for visiting ‘foreign friends’ touring the PRC in the mid-1960s, the domestic Chinese audience remained its primary target.¹¹ As such, the Central Bureau of Culture in Beijing paid close attention to the film. Even before *Collective Enemy* was released to the general public, top culture leaders in the months before were reviewing it closely, ultimately deeming it to “possess enormous political importance” and blessing it accordingly.¹² In the context of the ongoing Socialist Education Movement and political campaigns including ‘Learn from the People’s Liberation Army,’ this group argued, documentaries like this help to “strengthen the development of the people’s understanding of the international struggle, and thus allow for an even greater potential for accelerating and deepening the development of the Socialist Education Movement.”

Accordingly, they decided, such films should be given “the greatest importance in distribution and screening,” and each region should “to the best of their ability” have the films and ongoing political campaigns “accompany one another.” All culture bureaus across the country should propagandize these films extensively, screening them widely so they might “achieve their desired political effect.” Transcending barriers of literacy and education through appealing instead to sights and sounds, documentary films like *Collective Enemy* were an essential component of instrumentalizing the globe to serve China’s domestic political needs.

Some Chinese internationalist documentary films were remarkably transparent in their pursuit of mobilizing target audiences into political participation. In such cases, these films were ostensibly about events abroad, but ultimately focused the bulk (if not all) of their content on

¹⁰ *Dazhong Dianying [Mass Film]*, 4 (1964), 13.

¹¹ See, for example, SMA, C36-2-181.

¹² Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhuaabu [Central Department of Culture], “Guanyu xuanchuan, faxing, fangying wei woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo de jilu yingpian de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Propagandizing, Circulating, and Screening the Documentary Film ‘Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries’],” April 15, 1964, SXPA, 232-1-496, 171.

covering popular Chinese *reactions* to these global happenings. The August 1964 film *Invading Vietnam is Forbidden* offers a glimpse into this practice. Hastily crafted following the mass events across China earlier that month in protest against the Tonkin Gulf Incident, the film is entirely devoted to presenting what would seem to be the spontaneous, organic outrage of the Chinese people to U.S. actions in Vietnam. *Forbidden* relies on footage shot from the mass events held in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Xi'an, Kunming, Nanning, Shenyang, and Jinan.¹³ The film captures speeches by major PRC leaders, as well as shots of the vast crowds and various groups represented there. Though its title might have suggested otherwise, *Forbidden* was a film about China, made by China, and made for China; Vietnam was merely an offstage extra to the production. *Forbidden* was a massive sensation in the PRC, screened nearly 37,000 times before May 1965 for over 22 million Chinese spectators.¹⁴

The early 1965 film *Resolutely Support Vietnam* pursued a similar approach. This time the focus was the February 1965 mass rallies and protests across major Chinese cities in response to the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam and landing of ground troops in the South. *Resolutely* set out to emphasize and depict the massive Chinese crowds gathered at these events. Working with footage from various Chinese urban sites of the mass events, the film also contained clips of speeches by Chairman Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping.¹⁵ Though Vietnam was the reason bringing them together, it was clear who the main protagonists of the film truly were. As one review described the action,

On the screen we see in every scene, regardless of if it is at Tiananmen Square, or in front of the Vietnamese Embassy, or on the streets of Beijing, or on the seething streets of Tianjin, Shanghai, Xi'an, Guangzhou, or any large city, and regardless if it is men,

¹³ See *Dazhong Dianying [Mass Film]*, 8-9, (1964), 2.

¹⁴ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], "Tongchou difen, dadao Meidiguo zhuyi - Zhongguo renmin yuan Yue kang Mei xuanchuan zhanlan [Sharing a Bitter Hatred for a Common Enemy, Strike Down U.S. Imperialism - A Propaganda Exhibition of the Chinese People Supporting Vietnam, Resisting America]," June 24, 1965, SXPA, 196-1-254, 65.

¹⁵ See *Dazhong Dianying [Mass Film]*, 2-3 (1965), 2.

women, the elderly, young people, or if it is workers, peasants, soldiers, students, merchants, regardless of whichever ethnic minority, we all coalesce together around a single, unwavering, shared conviction: U.S. imperialism will lose, Vietnam will succeed!¹⁶

If the Chinese people themselves were the stars of a show designed for a Chinese audience, this was not said to be the case. Indeed, the film (like the mass events themselves) was presented as if the Chinese people were conveying their message to the world. As the same reviewer wrote, the protests depicted in the film “communicate to the entire world’s people with extreme clarity that the Chinese people are devoted to proletarian internationalism.”¹⁷ Though Chinese audiences were watching their compatriots on the big screen from theatres inside the PRC, there was a pervasive sense that the world beyond was watching the same scenes as well.

Owing to its ability to suggest the existence of both a nationwide and global community unified in support, *Resolutely Support Vietnam* continued to be screened widely for over a year after its creation.¹⁸ Whether people around the world were aware of the Chinese people’s righteous indignation over Vietnam or not, the citizens of the PRC themselves certainly were as over 54.5 million of them had viewed the film by May.¹⁹ Not long after *Resolutely* made its debut, the short documentary *American Imperialism, Get Out of the Dominican Republic* followed in its mold in June 1965. Depicting the massive crowds around Beijing that turned out for the mass rallies that followed Mao’s statement on U.S. intervention in the Democratic

¹⁶ See *Dazhong Dianying [Mass Film]*, 2-3 (1965), 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸ Indeed, the film continued to run into the early Cultural Revolution, where its Sinocentrism nearly came back to haunt the Party. So many CCP leaders were depicted attending the mass rally in Beijing, that those coming under scrutiny during the Cultural Revolution needed to be edited out of the film’s footage lest the Party send conflicting messages. As a 1966 Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department document makes clear, individuals including Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, Luo Ruiqing, and Zhou Yang were all to be scrubbed out of *Resolutely Support Vietnam* as well as *Invading Vietnam is Forbidden* (see Zhonggong Shaanxisheng Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department], “untitled,” undated, SXPA, 123-3-1149, 13-14).

¹⁹ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], “Tongchou difen, dadao Meidiguo zhuyi – Zhongguo renmin yuan Yue kang Mei xuanchuan zhanlan [Sharing a Bitter Hatred for a Common Enemy, Strike Down U.S. Imperialism – A Propaganda Exhibition of the Chinese People Supporting Vietnam, Resisting America],” June 24, 1965, SXPA, 196-1-254, 65.

Republic, the film also included shots of the rally held in Worker's Stadium and of foreign students participating in the Beijing protests.²⁰

Alongside *Invading Vietnam is Forbidden* and *Resolutely Support Vietnam*, the Sinocentric focus of these three films speaks to a kind of revolutionary narcissism that was essential to *domestic internationalism* working as a strategy. If, as Chinese audiences were being told, the Chinese revolution was a successful postcolonial model for oppressed peoples around the world, they ought to take great pains to continue building socialism in the PRC. What they had, the world wanted; the Chinese revolution must thus forge ahead. Building Chinese socialism served not only national ends, but global ones too – particularly so in a world said to be turning in the favor of progressive peoples everywhere. Internationalist documentary films helped Chinese spectators first to visualize and experience the exotic global locales figuring prominently in the world revolutionary struggle. But they also helped them to see what their own countrymen and women were doing about it at home in the PRC. There was a clear and distinct role for all Chinese people to play, and every contribution at home had a ripple effect around the world. Yet another kind of documentary film helped to build off latent Chinese nationalism and revolutionary narcissism – those depicting the travels of PRC leaders abroad.

Dating back several years before the 1960s, major diplomatic trips by Chinese leaders abroad would often yield documentary films capturing their various activities during the trip. State filmmakers would accompany Chinese dignitaries while abroad, film their every move, quickly edit the footage, and produce nearly hour-long pieces for the Chinese people to view. A narrator would usually provide a running commentary of the action, explaining local cultural traditions and particularities otherwise foreign to PRC viewers. In the 1960s, and especially as the PRC increasingly devoted itself to improving its forging relations with countries across the

²⁰ See *Dazhong Dianying [Mass Film]*, 6 (1965), 38-39.

Third World, these documentaries rapidly increased in number and importance for the Party. Filmmakers would be tasked with forging more films than in years past, and these works would be promoted more extensively than before; they would be reviewed in film periodicals as if they were feature films, and would enjoy wide circulation and screening, becoming mainstays of major celebrations including Worker's Day and National Day festivities.

Though the early 1960s yielded a noticeable bump in such films, the flood came in the wake of the famous late 1963-early 1964 trip taken by Premier Zhou Enlai and Foreign Minister Chen Yi to "14 Afro-Asian countries." Commencing in December 1963 and continuing until midway through February of the following year, their celebrated voyage was widely publicized by the Chinese press, and was framed as evidence against China's alleged international isolation amidst the Sino-Soviet rift. Though not always together, Zhou and Chen's itinerary saw them travel to the United Arab Republic (Egypt), Algeria, Morocco, Albania, Tunisia, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Sudan, Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Somalia, Burma (Myanmar), Pakistan, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).²¹

Within weeks of their return to the PRC the resulting documentary films began to emerge. By May 1964, the first three were released: *Premier Zhou Visits Albania*, *Premier Zhou Visits West Africa*, and *Premier Zhou Visits North Africa*. The following month produced *Vice-Chairperson Soong and Premier Zhou Visit Ceylon*, *Premier Zhou Visits North-East Africa*, *Premier Zhou Visits Burma*, and *Premier Zhou Visits Pakistan*.²² Over the following year the floodgates would remain open, with full-length documentaries crafted depicting each of Liu Shaoqi's travels to North Korea, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Vietnam in 1965, Zhou Enlai's trip to

²¹ Though Albania, of course, was considered by no one to be an 'Afro-Asian' country, the deployment of the privileged discourse of the 'Afro-Asian' (*Ya-Fei*) community would not be thwarted by this exception, and the journey was thus titled accordingly. The title of the trip was "Chinese Leaders Travel to 14 Afro-Asian Countries" (*Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi Ya-Fei guojia*).

²² Song Qingling (or Soong Ching-ling) was Vice-Chairperson of the PRC and the widow of Sun Yat-sen.

Tanzania that year, and one film capturing Chen Yi's visits to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal. A common fixture in all these films was the overwhelming insistence that Chinese leaders (and the personable Zhou, in particular) were adored around the world, but particularly amongst the postcolonial peoples of Asia and Africa. Moreover, these films were always sure to highlight how it was from the ordinary people of these host nations that this adoration sprung forth. China was an inspiration to these people, these films insinuated, and PRC leaders were the embodiment of the Chinese nation and people who were themselves a breath of fresh air amidst a world otherwise and heretofore unkind and oppressive.

Designed ostensibly to be relaying these messages unadulterated to the Chinese people, these films were an important part of articulating to them the success story that was the PRC on the international stage. Particularly as the spring 1964 films depicting the 14-country tour began to emerge, propaganda officials around the country were keen to put these films to use to help spur domestic political participation. Under the Central Bureau of Culture meticulous planning, the 14-country tour films were to be hastily prepared in time to screen them at the 1964 Worker's Day celebrations in Beijing that May.²³ From there, the first reels of the films would tour the country, so that each region might be able to benefit from their desired political effect. Clearly, the Party intended to achieve a broad, national dissemination of these initial reels, as they travelled to all corners of the PRC after leaving Beijing, a route that included stops at Shanghai, Tianjin, Xi'an, Urumqi, Fuzhou, Nanjing, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Kunming, Shenyang, and finally Harbin in the northeast.

²³ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhua bu [Central Department of Culture], "Guanyu xuanchuan, faxing, fangying wei woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo de jilu yingpian de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Propagandizing, Circulating, and Screening the Documentary Film 'Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries']," April 15, 1964, SXPA, 232-1-496, 169.

Each city was instructed to propagandize extensively about the films before they were screened there to ensure good popular turnout. Central Culture officials were pleased with how the films reflected “the shared encounter of invasion and oppression at the hands of imperialism experienced by the Chinese people and the people of many Afro-Asian countries.”²⁴ They also accurately portrayed how both the PRC and its Third World friends continued to share the “same task of struggle in opposition to imperialism and neo-colonialism.” Accordingly, these documentaries were helpful for Chinese viewers, as they “lead the broad masses to further their understanding of the current international situation,” and demonstrate to them how that situation “is increasingly favorable for the people of all countries, while being steadily unfavorable” for their various enemies around the world.

In its application of these Central directives from Beijing, culture officials in Shaanxi province were keen to use these documentaries to help summon mass political mobilization for the Socialist Education Movement there. Officials called for screenings to be followed immediately by gathering audiences together to collect their reflections on the films.²⁵ In so doing, Shaanxi culture workers wanted to ensure that the masses understood the film and took away the appropriate interpretation of its content. But their reports also indicate the extent to which Party propaganda in general, and *domestic internationalism* in particular, never operated as a one-way street. Top Party officials were always shrewd in tailoring their propaganda messages to accommodate themes and tropes they felt would resonate with their target popular audience. As part of this dynamic two-way interaction in the construction of propaganda

²⁴ Ibid., 170.

²⁵ Shaanxisheng Wenhua ju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu dianying faxing fangying gongzuo jinyibu zuohao peihe nongcun shehuizhuyi jiaoyu yundong yijian de buchong yijian [View and Supplementary Views Regarding Circulating and Screening Films to Help Accompany the Socialist Education Movement],” April 2, 1964, SXPA, 232-1-496, 7-9.

narratives, it was essential for Beijing – and its officials at all levels of society – to collect and analyze how various propaganda efforts were actually playing out in practice across the country.

As more reels of the 14-country tour documentary films were made, they were circulated around the country even more extensively. As they did so, they became absorbed and integrated into a number of local mass screenings and political training film festivals, designed to deftly merge the political with the pastime. In one such instance during the summer of 1964, Shanghai culture officials initiated the Student Summer Holiday Film Festival, which set out to ensure the continued political education of the city’s youth during their seasonal break from classes.²⁶ Alongside a host of popular fictional films celebrating themes of revolutionary will and boosting agricultural production, as well as foreign films from North Korea, Albania, the Soviet Union and Hungary, the lineup was sure to include all of the 14-country tour documentaries.

Owing to the success of the festival, the following year the Central Bureau of Culture, Department of Education, and the Communist Youth League issued a joint directive calling for a nationwide focus on encouraging students to view such films. The plan was for movie theatres across all large, medium, and even small-sized cities to offer periods where they would dedicate themselves exclusively to student screenings. Ticket prices were to be reduced and a comprehensive campaign of publicity across newspapers, television, and radio was to be timed to catch students right at the commencement of their summer holiday. The goal, their directive spelled out, was to “take a step forward in strengthening youth education in class [struggle], patriotism, and internationalism.”²⁷ The program would build off of two preexisting film

²⁶ Gongqingtuan Shanghai Shi Weiyuanhui [Communist Youth League Shanghai Municipal Committee] et al., “Guanyu anpai xuesheng shuqi guankan dianying de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Planning Summer Holiday Film Screenings for Students],” June 29, 1964, SMA, C21-2-2478, 27.

²⁷ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhua bu [Central Department of Culture] et al., “Guanyu juban shuqi xuesheng dianying zhuanchang de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding Summer Holiday Student Film Special Screenings],” June 23, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-727, 12.

festivals ongoing nationwide – one devoted to Soviet and East European films celebrating the defeat of German fascism in World War II, the second based on films related to “supporting the Vietnamese people’s patriotic struggle against the U.S.”

Included alongside Chinese cinematic hits like *Sentinels under the Neon Lights* (1964), *By the Jiangan River* (1964), and *After the Harvest* (1964), and documentaries encouraging science education, the directive listed a host of internationalist films of varying types they requested to have screened. An extensive list of Vietnam-related documentaries was privileged, and both *Awakened Africa* and the Sinocentric *American Imperialists, Get Out of the Dominican Republic* also made the cut.²⁸ In Shaanxi province’s implementation of the summer program, no less than 18 Vietnam-themed PRC documentaries were screened, including both *Invading Vietnam is Forbidden* and *Resolutely Support Vietnam* covering, of course, the Chinese response to U.S. actions there. Shaanxi also offered 9 different documentaries of PRC leaders travelling abroad, including all of the films derived from Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi’s 14-country tour. Hubei province, in central China, provided similar offerings in its version, adhering closely to the list laid out by Beijing in its effort to keep students politically stimulated through the summer.²⁹

While students were targeted in the summer programs, however, collective film screening programs also set their sights on the wider Chinese population. Escalating events in Vietnam would provide a perfect excuse for such an occasion. In April 1965, as the nationwide ‘support Vietnam, resist America’ campaign was launched against the backdrop of escalating U.S. intervention, a corresponding nationwide film festival was kicked off. Plans called for Chinese

²⁸ See *Ibid.*, 14-16.

²⁹ See Hubeisheng Wenhuaaju [Hubei Provincial Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu juban shuqi xuesheng dianying zhuanchang de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding Summer Holiday Student Film Special Screenings],” July 20, 1965 and Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhuaabu [Central Department of Culture] et al., “Guanyu juban shuqi xuesheng dianying zhuanchang de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding Summer Holiday Student Film Special Screenings],” June 23, 1965, HPA, SZ27-2-238-011, 39-44.

cities to privilege and organize screenings of Vietnam-centered films, including one cartoon piece, two fictional feature films, and seven documentary works. Unsurprisingly, these documentaries included both *Invading Vietnam is Forbidden* and *Resolutely Support Vietnam*, depicting recent Chinese mass events and giving every reason for PRC audiences to begin internalizing the nature and proximity of the ongoing Vietnamese struggle.³⁰

Indeed, the Central Bureau of Culture's directive for the film festival lays out precisely how they envisioned harnessing the Vietnam conflict for domestic Chinese political ends. First, by reflecting actions ongoing in Vietnam, Beijing felt these films would help to "strengthen [people's] battle will and their spirit of internationalism and patriotism."³¹ In so doing, they would "help the broad masses to take a step forward in recognizing the enormous significance of [the Vietnamese] struggle" and "stimulate their revolutionary moral indignation and sense of internationalist duty." Once this happened, officials felt, the films would "become a kind of encouragement to the people to go all out in making this country strong" and serve, for each Chinese individual, as a "motive to perform well each duty in their own work post." Just as *Invading Vietnam is Forbidden* and *Resolutely Support Vietnam* were films ostensibly about Vietnam but actually, in essence, about the PRC, so too was the April 1965 film festival. While Chinese support for Vietnam and the threat of their own war with the U.S. were genuine to be sure, the festival testifies to how this support always *also* served domestic political ends.

As such, it was to be carried out with great care and attention. In Shaanxi, the films were to be screened not simply in the province's many movie theatres, but also at factories,

³⁰ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhua bu [Central Department of Culture], "Guanyu peihe 《Meiguo qinlüezhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu》 yundong fangying Yuenan yingpian de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Screening Vietnamese Films as Part of the Campaign Accompanying American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam]," April 22, 1965, SXPA, 232-1-536, 64.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

community organizations, schools, and other select locations.³² All available measures should be deployed to publicize the screenings, moving far beyond simply newspapers and radio broadcasts. Short slideshow advertisements (preceding other films), banners, cartoons, and other means should be used to assemble an “eye-catching propaganda battlefield.”³³ Local propaganda officials should also strive, the plans spelled out, to penetrate factories, organizations, and even accost people on the street to talk to them about the situation in Vietnam. In so doing, officials should “encourage people to be on high alert, strengthen national defense, be active in their work, increase their production, study and work hard.” As the struggle in Vietnam turned hot, and as a legitimate war scare loomed over China’s southern border, the CCP was seizing the occasion to serve its own needs of political mobilization at home. Consequently, this would not be last film festival of its kind and another similar program was initiated that August, carried out widely across Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Kunming, Nanning, Shenyang, Xi’an, Chengdu, and Changsha.³⁴

But beyond nationwide film festivals, collective screenings and the shared experience of viewing these works was also an important part of political training efforts in specialized work units. In Shanghai, propaganda officials listed viewing Vietnam-themed documentary films as one of the foremost ways in which the ‘support Vietnam, resist America’ campaign ought to be carried into all organizations, factories, shops, schools, communes, and small neighborhoods throughout the city.³⁵ District-level propaganda officials in the city’s central Jing’an area, as

³² Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu peihe ‘Meiguo qinlüzhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu’ yundong yangchu Yuenan yingpian de jihua [Plans Regarding Screening Vietnamese Films as Part of the Campaign Accompanying American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam],” April 27, 1965, SXPA, 232-1-536, 65.

³³ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁴ See *Dazhong Diyaning* [Mass Film], 8-9 (1965), 37.

³⁵ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Guanyu yuanYue kangMei xingshi jiaoyu de qingkuang he jinhou yijian de baogao [Report Regarding the Circumstances of Situational Education on ‘Supporting Vietnam, Resisting America’ and Views for the Future],” June 21, 1965, SMA A22-2-1295, 17.

well as specific work units including the Shanghai Electric Cable Factory, followed accordingly, later attesting to the importance of using such works in their political training programs.³⁶ The city's Hetian Middle School did likewise and considered these screenings to be an important part of their efforts to “tutor” their students on events occurring around the world.³⁷

Indeed, including both political training programs and regular screenings alike, over 5.5 million local Shanghai residents took in Vietnam-related documentaries in nearly 6,000 individual screenings between August 1964 and May 1965 alone.³⁸ Most of these films covering Vietnam and other internationalist causes would experience further dissemination thanks to nationally circulated, film-related periodicals including *Mass Film (Dazhong Dianying)*. Such publications featured reviews of the films as well as multi-page advertisements with glossy stills of the on-screen action. Moreover, a number of these films and other documentary pieces on international events would be refashioned into slideshows (*huandengpian*), a low-cost medium facilitating their spread to the farthest reaches of the country's rural regions. Finally, internationalist documentary films formed an important part of visits to the PRC by varying types of ‘foreign friends.’ Dignitaries, cultural groups, and leftists from around the world would often be treated to screenings during their time in the PRC; one of many ways in which their Chinese hosts took it upon themselves to subtly frame these visits as pilgrimages to the cradle of revolution and postcolonial development.

³⁶ Jing'anqu Wanlong Jiedao Dangwei [Jing'an District Wanhong Neighborhood Party Committee], “Women zenyang dui junshu jinxing xingshi jiaoyu [How We Engage in Situational Education in Military Units],” undated, SMA A22-2-1287, 148, Zhonggong Shanghai Dianlanchang Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Electric Cable Factory Propaganda Department], “Yunyong duozhong duoyang xuanchuan fangshi xiang zhigong jinxing shishi jiaoyu [Use All Kinds of Propaganda Forms to Engage Workers in Current Affairs Education],” undated, *ibid.*, 264.

³⁷ Zhonggong Hetian Zhongxue Zhibu Weiyuanhui [Hetian Middle School Party Branch Committee], “Dazhua xingshi jiaoyu, cujin jiaoxue gaige - women shi zenyang xiang shisheng jinxing xingshi jiaoyu de [Grab Hold of Situational Education, Spur Reform in Education—How We Engage in Situational Education for Students and Teachers],” undated, SMA A22-2-1287, 231.

³⁸ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Shanghaishi qunzhongxing yuanYue kangMei zhezong tongji shuzi (cong 1964 nian 8 yue zhi 1965 nian 5 yue 20 ri) [Statistical Figures Regarding Shanghai's Mass ‘Support Vietnam, Resist America’ Campaign (August 1964 to May 20, 1965)],” undated, SMA A22-2-1295, 103.

Internationalist documentary films brought the world to the eyes and ears of a domestic Chinese audience. By forging a dynamic audio-visual component to their strategy of *domestic internationalism*, the Party adroitly accommodated the reality that if the plan was going to work, they needed to be able to transcend the literary, and make their message stimulating. These films – towing the line between graphic and uplifting – played into human emotion, and helped Chinese audiences better envision, and thus better imagine, these ongoing struggles playing out around the world. Not insignificantly, this process was aided by films ostensibly about internationalist causes, but actually focused on Chinese mass rallies and protests and what appeared to be an organic outgrowth of the Chinese people's collective rage.

Further still, films depicting the warm affection given to PRC leaders as they travelled abroad seemed to present a global landscape favorable to China, and turning at last in the direction of the world revolutionary community. Imagining this sense of community was an important part too of why communal screenings were so privileged in the PRC. Just as did mass rallies, so too these shared moments of collective experience and sentiment helped one to imagine an even broader, transnational fraternity based on the same shared ideals, where China's success was the world's success. Given the power and persuasion behind documentary films, it is no wonder why it was only one of several audio-visual mediums in the CCP's arsenal of internationalist propaganda.

Exhibiting the World: Photo Exhibitions and Chinese Revolutionary Narcissism

Though oft forgotten amidst the ubiquity of the Mao-era propaganda poster, the photograph played an indispensable part in CCP propaganda. While PRC periodicals including *People's Pictorial* and *World Affairs (Shijie Zhishi)* regularly carried images of internationalist happenings since the regime's earliest years, the use of the photograph and the shared experience of the photo exhibition gained new importance amidst China's 1960s and the Party's emphasis on *domestic internationalism*. In Shanghai alone, the first five months of 1965 saw over 1.6 million people visit temporary photo exhibitions commemorating the struggle of the Vietnamese people.³⁹ As Zachary Scarlett describes in his discussion of one exhibition commemorating the birth of Vietnam's National Liberation Front, the State Council in Beijing stressed the "great responsibility" that came along with the meticulous arrangement and presentation of these photos.⁴⁰ As the Party well knew, photos and the shared experience of the exhibition would play an integral role in facilitating a popular Chinese imagination of the world.

While the early 1960s witnessed nationally circulated exhibitions celebrating topics like the Cuban revolution, the anniversary of China's World War II defeat of Japan, and the PRC's friendship with Albania, therefore, by mid-decade the content of these events began to shift.⁴¹ Photo exhibitions were now fashioned to broach a wider swath of internationalist themes. In so doing, these events also carried strong Sinocentric undertones. Though seemingly about the

³⁹ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Shanghaishi qunzhongxing yuanYue kangMei zhezhong tongji shuzi (cong 1964 nian 8 yue zhi 1965 nian 5 yue 20 ri) [Statistical Figures Regarding Shanghai's Mass 'Support Vietnam, Resist America' Campaign (August 1964 to May 20, 1965)]," undated, SMA, A22-2-1295, 105.

⁴⁰ Scarlett, "China After the Sino-Soviet Split," 92.

⁴¹ See, for example, Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu juban 'shehuizhuyi A'erbania 20 nian tupian zhanlan' de baogao [Report Regarding Holding the '20 Years of Albania Photo Exhibition']" and Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu juban 'shehuizhuyi A'erbania 20 nian tupian zhanlan' de baogao [Report Regarding Holding the '20 Years of Albania Photo Exhibition']," April 6, 1965, SXPA 232-2-703, Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Youhao Xiehui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Guanyu Guba geming sheyang zhanlan de wenjian [File Regarding the Cuban Revolution Photo Exhibition]," March 1963, SMA, C37-2-127 and Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee] et al., "Yuenan zhengqu zuguo tongyi douzheng meishu zuopin zhanlan [Art Exhibition on the Vietnamese Struggle to Achieve National Unification]," undated, SMA, C37-2-132.

wider world, these exhibitions played into a pervasive revolutionary narcissism borne out of an enduring Chinese nationalism. This section will explore this phenomenon through a close examination of two photo exhibitions, one based on Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi's 14-country tour and the other in support of Vietnam's struggle against the U.S.

Upon the culmination of Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi's much-publicized visit to 14 'Afro-Asian' countries in late 1963 and early 1964, the Party was not content with the bevy of documentary films it fashioned in short order. An elaborate photo exhibition would also be crafted and would tour the PRC, offering no less than 347 images from their extensive travels. Three complete versions of the exhibition were prepared so they could set off in different directions, reaching as wide a domestic audience as possible as quickly as possible.⁴² The first route started in Nanjing, hit nearby Shanghai, moved south to Guangzhou, then worked its way back north, stopping at Changsha, Wuhan and Zhengzhou along the way. The second path commenced in Kunming in the far southwest, moving northward up western China, greeting audiences in Chengdu, Chongqing, Xi'an, and Lanzhou, before concluding in Hohhot in Inner Mongolia. The final arc began in Tianjin and crept toward the country's northeast, stopping in Jinan, Shenyang, Changchun, and ending in Harbin not far from the borders with the Soviet Union and North Korea. Like three armies moving across a vast territory as part of a coordinated plan of attack, the mission was the same: bring these images to the eyes of as many Chinese people, across as many far-flung cities, as soon as possible, allowing them to shape popular impressions of the world accordingly. Before the roaming armies would be dispatched, however,

⁴² See Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], "Guanyu juban 'woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan' de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding the 'Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition']," April 24, 1964, SXPA, 232-2-702, 2.

the exhibition would be kicked off with an opening ceremony in Beijing. The event featured speeches and a ribbon cutting, and was attended by a group of invited ‘foreign friends’ composed of students, trainees, and diplomats.

The exhibition itself, presented the same way in each city it visited, began with an introduction guiding viewers in how they should interpret the ensuing photographs. The trips taken by Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi “make a major contribution,” it spelled out, “toward safeguarding world peace.”⁴³ Their voyage was an “enormously significant” event with “deep and lasting historical meaning.” There was no mistaking the underlying message: the PRC was not simply any country; when its leaders travel the world – and especially the postcolonial world – they are affecting the lives of people all around the globe; they are making history.

The exhibition then went on to follow Zhou and Chen as they moved from country to country. It began with Albania, perhaps subtly distinguishing it from the otherwise ‘Afro-Asian’ nations on the tour. In Kenya, Chen Yi is shown displaying to leader Jomo Kenyatta pictures of China’s impressive development.⁴⁴ In the United Arab Republic, Zhou is given flowers by young women, and youngsters are described in the accompanying captions as “warmly welcoming” him. The exhibit’s section on Algeria includes a photo of Zhou and Chen with the country’s leader Ben Bella, alongside a Chinese medical aid worker stationed there. Indeed, many photos throughout the exhibit depict factories and other development projects, emphasizing at once the importance of postcolonial development and modernization, while also insinuating the PRC as a tangible and inspirational guide to foreign attempts at these processes.

⁴³ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee] and Xinhuashe [Xinhua News Agency], “Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan [Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-702, 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

China as a friend and a mentor was a theme that colored the exhibition. The Algeria section continues with photos of Zhou and Chen at the naming ceremony for “Beijing Boulevard,” a new road in Algiers. In both Sudan and Somalia, welcome banners hang, some with messages like “Long Live Zhou Enlai!”⁴⁵ In each country represented, PRC leaders are captured greeting massive crowds at large-scale rallies. To conclude, the final seven images of the exhibit appear under the heading “Returning Home Victorious,” and feature Zhou and Chen touching down in the PRC to a hero’s welcome.⁴⁶ In fact, the seven-photo spread includes pictures of their initial stop in Kunming, of Mao and Liu Shaoqi then greeting Chen and Zhou in Beijing, and of Song Qingling returning to Shanghai – a deliberate effort to summon a nationalist Chinese pride, drawing upon all corners of the country. In all of these culminating photos, the returning leaders are greeted with handshakes and flowers, offering a parallelism to their receptions abroad – Zhou and Chen are proud symbols of the Chinese people, but their significance is global; a gift from China to the world.

In Nanjing, the exhibition attracted some 82,000 spectators over its May 1964 two-week run.⁴⁷ Audiences there reportedly remarked that the photos proved to them the warm reception PRC leaders enjoyed from the world’s people and the “deep and lasting friendship” between the people of China and those of each of these countries. This, in turn, allowed them to “realize how to dedicate oneself to fulfill the duties of the international proletariat in the Mao Zedong era.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee] and [Xinhua News Agency], “Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan [Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition],” undated, *ibid.*, 24, 26.

⁴⁶ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee] and [Xinhua News Agency], “Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan [Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition],” undated, *ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁷ Jiangsusheng Wenhuaaju [Jiangsu Provincial Bureau of Culture], Nanjingshi Wenhuaaju [Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Culture], et al., “Guanyu 《woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan》 zai Ning zhanchu qingkuang de jianbao [Briefing Regarding the Circumstances of Holding the ‘Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition’ in Nanjing],” June 2, 1964, SMA, C37-2-134, 14.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The fate of these people, their respective countries, and even the world, were inextricably tied to events unfolding in China, audiences surmised.

The Shanghai exhibition, jointly hosted by the Municipal Bureau of Culture and the local chapter of the Chinese People's Foreign Cultures Association, kicked off in late June at the Shanghai Museum. Like every city lucky enough to host the exhibition, plans called for extensive publicity to be carried out on television, radio, and in local newspapers like Shanghai's *Liberation Daily*, *Culture Report (Wenhuibao)*, and *New Citizen Evening News (Xinmin Wanbao)*.⁴⁹ Additionally, large advertisement signs were posted throughout the city, including one at the intersection of Huaihai Middle Road and Ruijin Road, not far from the Museum and the bustling, traffic-heavy People's Square. Officials wanted to stress specifically some points derived from the exhibit's introduction, namely the "immense political significance" of the trip and the exhibition's content. In fact, this point was to be included in a publicity circular sent out to regional Party committees across the PRC, so they might conduct "oral presentations" and "blackboard" instruction to encourage people to attend and to sufficiently prepare them for interpreting the photos they would encounter.⁵⁰

The Shanghai exhibition was well attended despite heavy rain throughout the run, and several foreign friends participated including several Albanian students and trainees living there, as well as the Guinean Ambassador to the PRC.⁵¹ Over 500 different groups of spectators came through the exhibit, organized by their particular organizations, industrial enterprises, or schools.

⁴⁹ Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture] and Duiwai Wenxue Shanghaishi Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan jihua [Plans for the 'Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition']," May 23, 1964, SMA, C37-2-134, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture] and Duiwai Wenxue Shanghaishi Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "'Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan" zai Hu zhanchu qingkuang huibao [Report on the Circumstances of Holding the 'Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition' in Shanghai]," July 18, 1964, SMA, C37-2-134, 7.

Recording their thoughts in comment books placed on site, a number of spectators said they felt Zhou Enlai's travels indicated the "great success" of the PRC's current line in foreign policy and prove that "our friends are spread 'all under heaven.'"⁵² The wording here was conspicuous, as the designation 'all under heaven' or *tianxia* harkened back to the halcyon days of China's centrality in the global order, and these commenters almost certainly had such grandiose notions in mind when viewing pictures of a world seemingly yearning to be shaped in China's image.

In the wake of the exhibition, several Shanghai groups conducted 'discussion sessions' on the experience, soliciting personal reflections from those under their jurisdiction. One staff member in Zhabei district's Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference remarked that the pictures offered him "great encouragement," and helped him to "resolve issues" about understanding the world he "could not rectify from studying alone."⁵³ A student in Huangpu district's Building Bright Middle School saw in the photos China's internationalist obligations, realizing that "as China's position on the international stage steadily grows, so too does our duty increase...our eyes must gaze out at faraway places around the world." He went on,

Right now, our lives here are very good, but two-thirds of people around the world have not yet been liberated, so we must therefore support world revolution; first our country must continue building until it becomes prosperous and strong, and we will become the youth of a New China who not only shoulder the responsibilities of the Chinese revolution, but who are also tasked with the most important duties of world revolution.⁵⁴

This notion of a rising China and a world looking to it for support was also prevalent amongst residents from Huangpu's Number Two New Development neighborhood. A summary of their thoughts indicate how they too felt China's international standing was "rising daily," and it continued to make friends "spread 'all under heaven.'" The head of the Number One National Cotton Factory in Zhabei district felt the exhibition allowed Chinese people to connect Zhou

⁵² Ibid., 8.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Enlai's "efforts in the name of peace and solidarity" with "our own thought work." This would lead China's workers to practice "painstaking patience, defy difficulty, spur production and development" and to "dedicate still more energy to building socialism" since this all has an important "secondhand effect" in "extending a helping hand to world revolution." The Chinese revolution, these individuals gleaned from the exhibition, shared a close and intricate connection with world revolution. Their efforts at home, therefore, however small and domestic in their orientation, were actually global acts made also for the world beyond China's borders.

Some five weeks later it was Xi'an's turn to travel the world with Zhou and Chen. The opening ceremony kicking off the event was attended by major provincial and municipal figures including the Mayor of Xi'an, the local bureau chief of the Xinhua News Agency, and the chief editors of *Shaanxi Daily*, *Xi'an Evening Paper*, and the Shaanxi People's Radio Station.⁵⁵ Again, plans called for wide publication of the exhibition before it commenced, and a five-scene slideshow advert was fashioned and shown at all movie theatres in the region throughout the exhibit's run. Billboard advertisements were placed at major locations including the train station and popular intersections. In addition to such measures "designed to attract ordinary people to freely choose to attend the exhibition," planning directives spelled out, "we should organize work units in all organizations, clubs, factories, and schools to attend."⁵⁶ While the hope was for people to *want* to attend, the Party was not about to leave it up to chance. Indeed, to further "facilitate spectators attending," the exhibit was made open from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. each day

⁵⁵ Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu juban 'Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan' de jihua [Plans for the 'Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition]," July 28, 1964, SXPA, 232-2-702, 34.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

during its run.⁵⁷ The Party was proud of the event it had crafted, and was confident it would “obtain for the masses a more lively education in internationalism and patriotism.”⁵⁸

Accordingly, upon the exhibition’s completion in Xi’an, officials in charge there meticulously catalogued the event’s results and presented them in reports to the Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture. The report spelled out how the exhibit brought in 112,296 unique visitors, a figure composed of 27,630 workers, 5,344 peasants, 9,538 soldiers, 26,459 students, 34,974 Party cadres, and 8,351 people identified merely as “residents” (*jumin*).⁵⁹ It then went on to pass along some thoughts of the spectators there, derived from the visitor’s book at the event venue. One reflection applauded the exhibition for helping “the broad masses to take a step forward in their understanding of the enormous political significance” of this trip.⁶⁰ Another highlighted how the “warm friendly reception” and “grand welcome” offered Zhou and Chen “indicates the lofty prestige” the PRC enjoys on the global stage. One soldier in the PLA felt the photos showed how the trip itself “has enhanced the friendship between the Chinese people and all the peoples of Africa and Asia,” which helps make “impossible” enemy attempts to “alienate our country.” The exhibition had, as planned, left spectators with an overwhelming sense that the world was turning in China’s favor, and that the trajectory of the Chinese revolution was perfectly in sync with developments occurring internationally. After years of domestic hardship and despite the harm caused by Moscow’s revolutionary treachery, all was in fact well.

⁵⁷ Shaanxi Ribao [Shaanxi Daily], “‘Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan’ [‘Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition’],” August 5, 1964, SXPA, 232-2-702, 53.

⁵⁸ Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu juban ‘Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan’ de jihua [Plans for Holding the ‘Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition’],” July 28, 1964, SXPA, 232-2-702, 34.

⁵⁹ Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu juban ‘Woguo lingdaoren fangwen shisi guo tupian zhanlan’ de baogao [Report Regarding Holding the ‘Chinese Leaders Visit 14 Countries Photo Exhibition’],” August 19, 1964, SXPA, 232-2-702, 55.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

Echoing the tone of revolutionary paternalism the exhibition carried with respect to some of the Third World nations represented, the report went on to detail how the photos led spectators to “see the people of Asia and Africa as industrious and courageous, and full of vitality.”⁶¹ Referencing the myriad photos of development and modernization across these countries, the “new appearance of these countries after having cast off colonial rule” gave viewers a chance to “recognize even better the great revolutionary situation in the current international realm.” Indeed, some attendees were reported as claiming, they could “see that every day is better than the last, and every day the enemy continues his decline.”

The favorable portrait of the world the exhibition was presenting was said to be successfully causing “people to become optimistic in their hearts.” As a result, they “feel deeply the mightiness of the homeland, the correctness of the Party’s leadership, and the unparalleled superiority of the socialist system.” Just as *domestic internationalism* was strategically designed to do, the international realm was instrumentalized to encourage Chinese audiences to believe their country and their Party were doing something right. Many viewers, the report spelled out, left the exhibition vowing to

Work hard, study hard, and always be a red revolutionary soldier so as to resolutely carry out the socialist revolution to the end, thereby offering a concrete act in support of the revolutionary struggle of the world’s people against imperialism, revisionism, and neo-colonialism.⁶²

Though the world needed the Chinese people, citizens of the PRC could offer this support simply by pouring themselves into China’s own revolution at home. As these images of the world’s embrace of Chinese leaders testified, China’s socialism held global stakes.

⁶¹ Ibid., 59.

⁶² Ibid.

Owing to the success of the exhibition, the photos of Zhou and Chen's 14-country tour were thereafter repackaged and published in an oversized book sold nationwide.⁶³ While the exhibition would be the only one of its kind explicitly celebrating Chinese statesmen in their travels abroad, a flood of Vietnam inspired photo exhibitions would sweep across the PRC in the mid-1960s, each carrying varying degrees of Sinocentrism in their content. After the Tonkin Gulf Incident ramped up China's 'support Vietnam, resist America' campaign after August 1964, photo exhibitions became one of several avenues through which to bring the war to the eyes and ears of PRC citizens. That December, one exhibition ushered in the 4th anniversary of the NLF.

Kicked off in Beijing on the final day of the year, this 147-picture spread would thereafter make its way to Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Changsha, before skirting along the Sino-Vietnamese border stopping in Nanning and Kunming.⁶⁴ In Shanghai, attending students claimed the images inspired them to want to "dedicate their body in the classroom, and their hearts toward the world."⁶⁵ By doing their part at home for "China's tomorrow," they would be simultaneously working "for the liberation of the people of South Vietnam, for the liberation of all the world's people." Integral to this conceptual conjoining of the local and the global was their insistence to "not forget the past" – China's past. Viewing China's developmental trajectory from semi-colony to (self-described) postcolonial success story as a blueprint for all the world's people, these students and others like them came to believe that contributing to the

⁶³ *Ya-Fei renmin fandì datuanjie wansui: Woguo lingdaoren fangwen Ya-Fei shisan guo tupianji* [Long Live the Great Solidarity of the Afro-Asian People: Selected Photos from Chinese Leaders' Travels to 13 Afro-Asian Countries], (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe [People's Press], 1964).

⁶⁴ Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Yuenan nanfang jiefang zhenxian chengli si zhounian tupian zhanlan zhanchu jihua [Plans for Holding the '4th Anniversary of the Founding of the Southern Vietnamese National Liberation Front Photo Exhibition']," 1965, SMA, C37-2-138, 1.

⁶⁵ Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui Shanghaishi Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Yuenan nanfang jiefang zhenxian chengli si zhounian tupian zhanlan Shanghai zhanchu xiaojie [Brief Summary of Shanghai's Hosting of the '4th Anniversary of the Founding of the Southern Vietnamese National Liberation Front Photo Exhibition']," March 5, 1965, SMA, C37-2-138, 11.

Chinese revolution was coterminous with supporting the liberation of all oppressed peoples around the world.

Such notions would gain considerable traction with the first major nationwide Chinese photo exhibition about the Vietnamese struggle, emerging in the spring of 1965. Entitled *American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam!*, the exhibit featured 257 images designed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the Vietnamese struggle to date. Unlike the exhibition depicting Zhou and Chen's 14-country tour, a synchronized nationwide deployment of *American Invaders* was deemed critical; amidst the high tension and palpable war scare in the PRC as the U.S. dramatically stepped up its intervention and initiated its bombing campaign in the early months of 1965, time was of the essence in bringing that war's realities to the Chinese people. Accordingly, the exhibition was to take place during the same three-week period in late April through mid-May in all 32 different cities across 28 distinct provinces and autonomous zones where it appeared.⁶⁶ The exhibit would run far and wide, from Harbin in the northeast to Urumqi in the northwest autonomous zone of Xinjiang, and from Hohhot up in Inner Mongolia down to Guiyang and Fuzhou in southern China. By the end of May, nearly 3 million Chinese people had personally viewed the exhibition, with countless more following along through extensive media coverage of its content and spectacle.

The exhibit opened with a forward, spelling out how the PRC had “always” supported the Vietnamese people and were committed to fulfilling its “internationalist duty.”⁶⁷ After cementing China as the staunchest and most committed ally of the Vietnamese people, it then

⁶⁶ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], “Tongchou difen, dadao Meidiguo zhuyi – Zhongguo renmin yuan Yue kang Mei xuanchuan zhanlan [Sharing a Bitter Hatred for a Common Enemy, Strike Down U.S. Imperialism – A Propaganda Exhibition of the Chinese People Supporting Vietnam, Resisting America],” June 24, 1965, SXPA, 196-1-254, 79.

⁶⁷ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhua Bu [Central Department of Culture] and Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], “‘Meiguo qinlüezhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu!’ tupian zhanlan (mulu shuoming) [American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition (Catalogue of Descriptions)],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-704, 100.

informs of how “the whole world’s people are also steadily expressing their support.” The images commence with an emphasis on the U.S.’s violation of Vietnamese sovereignty, dating back to the 1954 Geneva Conference and the west’s intransigence despite the French defeat. Delving into the mounting U.S. presence in South Vietnam, it then turns its attention to American “advisors” playing a *de facto* military role, and the brutality of Washington’s Strategic Hamlet Program.⁶⁸ Roughly thirty images in, the exhibit displays the horrors of razed temples, forced imprisonment, and violent massacres, all at the hands of the U.S.-Ngo Dinh Diem clique in power. Over seventy photos later, the viewer reaches the recent U.S. expansion of the war. While the devastation of the bombing of North Vietnam is emphasized, there are also several shots promoting the optimistic outlook of the North Vietnamese and NLF cause, including several images lauding guerilla surprise attacks against U.S. personnel alongside the caption: “Reaping what one sows.”⁶⁹

It is at the commencement of the fourth and final section of the exhibition, however, where *American Invaders* sought to make an important conceptual intervention for its Chinese viewers. Titled “All the Chinese people and the world’s people resolutely support the Vietnamese people in their patriotic struggle against the U.S.!,” this section contains 66 photos. The first 47 of these images, however, capture scenes from China and feature the Chinese people’s response to events in Vietnam. This extended sequence opens with several shots of mass rallies in Beijing, including four from 1964 and two from mere months earlier in 1965. A handful of photos capture the crowds amassed in front of Tiananmen Square from various angles.

⁶⁸ The Strategic Hamlet Program was a joint South Vietnamese-U.S. plan, initiated in 1962, to counter the communist insurgency in the South Vietnamese countryside by pacifying those regions, thereby limiting the influence of communist guerrillas there.

⁶⁹ Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wenhuaabu [Central Department of Culture] and Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], “‘Meiguo qinlüezhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu!’ tupian zhanlan (mulu shuoming) [American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition (Catalogue of Descriptions)],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-704, 107.

Mass protest demonstrations are then depicted from Haikou on Hainan Island along the PRC coastline to the Gulf of Tonkin, opposite the DRV's Haiphong. These are followed by images of the Vietnamese text, *Letters from the South*, a collection of letters allegedly written by NLF fighters to their loved ones in the North, and adapted in early 1965 into a Chinese stage play also depicted here in the exhibition.

This first sub-section, dealing mainly with PRC support efforts up to 1964, concludes with an almost self-referential shot of Chinese people attending the December 1964 photo exhibition in Beijing commemorating the NLF. As this images betrays, each component propaganda medium of *domestic internationalism* – from mass rallies to photo exhibitions to stage plays – could be recycled in a kind of regenerative process to be used again in refashioned form; images of the Vietnamese battlefield might mobilize a Chinese audience into action, but so too might images of Chinese people *viewing* those very images. The act of attending the exhibition thus became integrated as a part of the larger struggle itself – a meta-narrative in the larger story of carrying out world revolution.

The exhibition's fourth section then goes on to demonstrate the immense wave of support moving across China since the U.S.'s intensification of the war in early 1965. The February mass rally in Beijing is featured heavily, first with shots of Mao addressing the crowd at Tiananmen, listed in the caption as "1.5 million" strong.⁷⁰ Images of the Beijing crowds ensue, including one of PLA soldiers, another of "the masses," one of a People's Militia unit and another of "protesting masses" performing a 'living newspaper play.' The following handful of photos capture the corresponding mass rallies occurring in Shanghai, Tianjin, Wuhan, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Shenyang, Pingxiang, Xi'an, Nanning, Chongqing, and Kunming respectively. While all of these images were designed to suggest an organic and spontaneously synchronized

⁷⁰ Ibid., 112.

outpouring of Chinese rage and support, the inclusion of the Pingxiang image is a curious one. Situated in Guangxi Autonomous Region along the Sino-Vietnamese border (and listed as such in the photo's caption), Pingxiang was conspicuously included to suggest the proximity of the PRC as a collective whole to the ongoing hostilities to the south. The threat of war was real, to be sure, but it was also an opportunity for the CCP to instrumentalize that threat to achieve wartime political mobilization as well.

The section then concludes with roughly 20 photos of worldwide support for the Vietnamese people. These included images of popular protest from North Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Cambodia, Pakistan, Burma, Algeria, Mali, Albania, France, Cuba, and even New York City. The overwhelming majority of the world's people, these images suggested, were behind the Vietnamese cause. China was there first, China supported them most staunchly, and China could even become pulled into the war militarily – but the world was moving in China's direction, following its lead, on its side. This, of course, was a positive development, and ought to help encourage one to support China, so that *it* might support the world.

In Shanghai, over 190,000 spectators viewed the exhibition during its run. As planners there had hoped, the exhibit drew a wide cross-section of the city's inhabitants, including industrial workers, Party cadres, students, and “neighborhood women,” according to reports.⁷¹ A number of these spectators recorded their reflections upon completing the exhibit. One person felt the photos reveal “the mighty significance of Chairman Mao's concepts of ‘everyone a soldier’ and ‘people's war.’”⁷² Another young student remarked that the images helped him realize that even though “today we are living in a new society,” they cannot forget about “class

⁷¹ Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui Shanghaishi Fenhui Bangongshi [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], “‘Meiguo qinlüezhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu’ tupian zhanlanhui zhanchu qingkuang jianbao (yi) [Briefing on Holding the American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition (1)],” May 8, 1965, SMA, C37-2-139, 4.

⁷² Ibid.

struggle” or how many countries are still living under “domination.”⁷³ Helping to corroborate such notions, a large number of foreign friends attended the exhibition, their presence and words seeming to confirm the authenticity of China’s place of centrality within the global movement to support Vietnam and condemn America.

In Shaanxi, *American Invaders* was first unveiled in Xi’an before touring throughout the province in an effort to draw in as many spectators as possible. As Provincial Bureau of Culture plans reveal, officials were given specific instructions to raise three flags at the entrance to the exhibit – those of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), the NLF, and the PRC. Banners were hung, adorned with slogans like “Raise Vigilance, Be Ready at All Times to Smash the American Invaders!” and “American Invaders...Get Out of All Places You Have Invaded!” Planners also explicitly identified how they hoped the exhibit would help the “broad masses” to “vividly see the positive situation” in Vietnam.⁷⁴ By receiving “a lesson in internationalism and patriotism,” officials hoped people would “feel extremely indignant” about the “monstrous crimes against the Vietnamese people.” Only by gaining a sensory appreciation for what was happening to China’s south could Chinese people make sense of Vietnam and how it correlated back to their own lives in the PRC.

Over 220,000 people viewed the exhibition in Xi’an, including nearly 68,000 students and over 50 foreigners. The images appeared to serve their intended effect, as many spectator responses betray a conceptual linkage being forged between Vietnam and China’s domestic revolution. One worker from the Xi’an Textile Factory spoke on behalf of his work unit, declaring “we factory workers, our bodies are here in the workshop, but our eyes are on the

⁷³ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁴ Zhongguo Renmin Baowei Shijie Heping Weiyuanhui Shaanxisheng Fenhui [Chinese People’s Committee to Safeguard World Peace Shaanxi Provincial Chapter] and Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu juban ‘Meiguo qinlüzhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu!’ tupian zhanlan de gongzuo jihua [Work Plans Regarding Holding the American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-704, 1.

world. In support of Vietnam, we are determined to achieve outstanding results, and complete in full our production tasks.”⁷⁵ One rural peasant pledged to “work hard to raise our agricultural production and obtain a double bumper harvest this year in grain and cotton so as to conduct a concrete act of support for our fraternal Vietnamese people!”

Others were keen to join the fighting directly. One PLA soldier remarked that “at the sound of the Vietnamese people calling out,” he would “grab [his] weapon and hurry to the frontline!” According to official reports, one student from Northwest University even signed the visitor’s book with his own blood, writing that America’s “blood debt must be repaid in blood, I vow to be a part of Vietnam’s backup force.” Those less militant, but equally moved, expressed their emotions in the book through poems or ‘clapper-talk’ (*kuaiban*), a kind of rhythmic speech intended to be performed. Outside the exhibition hall, some spectators followed up their visit by engaging in drawn-out discussions with one another about its content.⁷⁶

The ‘foreign friends’ attending were overwhelmingly Vietnamese nationals, and played an important part of authenticating the event. These guests were greeted warmly and even applauded by Chinese attendees. One student rushed toward a Vietnamese guest in attendance, declaring that to “come across a friend from so far away makes my heart extremely excited...the Vietnamese people’s struggle is also our struggle!” “Your victory,” another student shouted, “is also our victory!” So enthusiastic were these Chinese students, they almost appeared to be commandeering Vietnam’s fight for national reunification, removing it from its central context and transnationalizing its importance equally for all revolutionary peoples of the world.

⁷⁵ Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu juban ‘Meiguo qinlüezhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu’ tupian zhanlan qingkuang de baogao [Report on Holding the American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition],” July 1, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-704, 25.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Other spectators were keen to inform the Vietnamese guests of all they would do at home in the PRC in the name of the Vietnamese people. We will “study hard, exercise our bodies, actively engage in militia training,” one person claimed, so we are ready to fight “shoulder-to-shoulder” should you need us.⁷⁷ In response, the Vietnamese spectators in attendance grasped their hands and thanked their Chinese hosts for “holding this exhibition, allowing the Chinese people to understand” Vietnam’s struggle. “We will,” they promised, “relay your deep and touching thoughts to the people” of Vietnam. They went on,

Seeing the ‘resist America, support Vietnam’ atmosphere all across China, we want to take your support for the Vietnamese people and communicate it to all of our people, workers, and soldiers, encouraging them in their fight.⁷⁸

Straight from the horse’s mouth, Chinese audiences were hearing that their actions – even their mere attendance at the *American Invaders* photo exhibition – served a tangible purpose in Vietnam, the frontline of the world revolutionary struggle.

Similar results were achieved when the exhibition touched down in Yan’an later in May. Amongst the over 23,000 people who attended the event, Xu Junyuan, a public security worker, declared herself keen to “engage in practical acts of support for the Vietnamese people...by actively working, managing her household diligently and thriftily.”⁷⁹ “If Vietnam needs money,” she continued in this vein, “I will donate money; if they need fighters, we can give them fighters.” A schoolteacher also pledged a financial contribution, informing her school to divert 10 *yuan* from her salary directly to support Vietnam. Post-exhibition reports indicate how attendees committed themselves to various domestic goals in the name of Vietnam, including promises to “raise vigilance, strengthen national defense, actively engage in labor, boost production, study

⁷⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Shaanxisheng Yan’an Zhuan Yuan Gongshu Wenjiaojü [Shaanxi Province Yan’an Prefectural Commissioner’s Office Bureau of Culture and Education], “Guanyu ‘Meiguo qinlüezhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu’ tupian zhanlan de zongjie baogao [Summary Report on the American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition],” May 31, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-704, 117.

hard, [and] double work output.” A farmhand and member of the People’s Militia remarked that Vietnam inspired him to “take the hoe in one hand, the gun in the other hand.” One young woman was so captivated by the images of female Vietnamese guerillas that she was eager to join an all-female militia in the PRC.

So successful was the exhibition in Yan’an deemed by Party officials, that *American Invaders* was actually reprised there three months later in August 1965. This time, however, officials decided to tour the exhibition around the various counties within the city limits. Over the five months between August and December of that year, the exhibition covered 14 counties spending roughly 10 days in each. Following Yan’an’s lead, other cities in Shaanxi did the same. In Qishan County in the city of Baoji, over 9,000 people visited the exhibit.⁸⁰ Among them was a student who signed his name as Black Tiger, and penned a song which included the lyrics,

Our international obligations are as high as heaven /
I vow to extract from the fields a bumper harvest /
To support Vietnam and resist America by showing true guts.

Another youngster committed to “offer concrete contributions to the Vietnamese struggle” by following the Party’s call to “study hard [and] actively participate in each political campaign.”⁸¹

County reports indicate that officials in Qishan felt *American Invaders* was “smoothly carried out” and “obtained a relatively good result” with respect to its intentions of emphasizing the “importance of Party leadership.”⁸² The report goes on to spell out a number of “important” things they felt the accomplished. First, they felt their promotion of the exhibition helped to forge a sense of momentum and cultivate an appropriate atmosphere for it to thrive. Second, they were pleased with how they vigorously organized spectators into a collective whole. Third,

⁸⁰ Qishanxian Wenjiao Weishengju [Qishan County Bureau of Culture, Education and Public Health], “Guanyu juban ‘Meiguo qinlüzhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu’ tupian zhanlan gongzuo zongjie baogao [Summary Report on Holding the American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition],” August 28, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-704, 139.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

they felt positively about training sessions they deployed in which they would have spectators describe the exhibit's images, and would then seize the opportunity to intervene and provide context for some photos. Finally, officials there were proud of how they deployed artistic propaganda to accompany the exhibition. This was most prominent in schools, where students would view slideshow films and sing a variety of songs including "The Vietnamese People Fight Well" and "All the World's People Are Rising Up."⁸³ For all these reasons, Qishan officials felt, the exhibition became more "vivid and dramatic" for attendees, thereby "enhancing the effectiveness and results of such propaganda."

Bin County in the Shaanxi city of Xianyang was also keen, in the wake of the exhibition, to analyze their results. *American Invaders* had provided good "thought education" in both patriotism and internationalism, they felt. They reached this conclusion based on personal testimonials of the spectators themselves. One man admitted he did not regularly read newspapers, and was thus not familiar with where in the world Vietnam was. The exhibition, he claimed, helped immensely, allowing him to realize how "their real reason for invading Vietnam was to facilitate their invasion of China."⁸⁴ While officials were likely pleased with this man's enhanced ability to perceive the tangible security threat the war did hold for China, his Sinocentric reading of U.S. motives in Vietnam indicate the extent to which the crux connecting the global with the local was the national. If Party propagandists could convince this man and his compatriots to view this international event as implicating, and even affecting, China, they could find a way to encourage him to care about this event a world away and carry that enthusiasm into his own daily, local pursuits. The threat of war spilling from Vietnam into

⁸³ Ibid., 142.

⁸⁴ Binxian Wenhuan [Bin County Legation of Culture], "Guanyu juban 'Meiguo qinlue zhe cong Yuenan gunchuqu' tupian zhanlan zongjie baogao [Summary Report on Holding the American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam! Photo Exhibition]," October 27, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-704, 155.

China was real; but the full propaganda value of this threat could only be exploited if Chinese people adequately *perceived* this threat.

Bin County also concluded that *American Invaders* had raised the class consciousness of the “broad masses,” lifted their “revolutionary vigilance,” and hardened their sense of “war preparedness.”⁸⁵ “When I saw the pictures,” one testimonial read, “I realized my class consciousness was not high, my vigilance was slack and I underestimated the enemy.” Accordingly, this man committed himself to taking his militia training more seriously, to study hard Mao’s *Collected Works*, to combine together his study, labor and exercises, and, above all, to prepare sufficiently to repel a potential U.S. invasion and “protect the building of socialism here in the homeland.” A Bin County commune member returned home following the exhibition pledging himself to boosting agricultural production and to defending the PRC by “dedicating all of my strength and energies.” If one could not travel to Vietnam or the Sino-Vietnamese border, weapon in tow, they would do what they could locally – plow, study, train, prepare for what may come.

Following in this vein, the exhibition was deemed to have “promoted current work,” including raising production and encouraging people to “perform their work well” as an act of concrete support to the Vietnamese cause. Bin County calculated that in the wake of the exhibition, and as local residents were increasingly keen to carry out their work in the name of supporting Vietnam, there were detectable rises in the production of cabbage crops and grain, and notable incidences of water and resource conservation. One local city management officer (*chengguan*) requested to be ‘sent down’ to the countryside to have the chance to participate directly in agricultural production and make a more tangible contribution to Vietnam.⁸⁶ Finally,

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 156.

culture officials in Bin County felt too the exhibition had spurred many local government organizations themselves to become “more revolutionary.” In turn, this served as a kind of “thought reform” for them, and left them better positioned to carry out the Party’s policies and targets – most notably those pertaining to agriculture in the countryside.

Bin officials attributed the apparent success of the *American Invaders* exhibition to political training sessions held before it kicked off. Additionally, mediums including ‘chalkboard’ newspapers (*heibanbao*), wall posters, and radio broadcasts helped further publicize the event and prepare spectators for its content.⁸⁷ Officials also credited accompanying the exhibition with a variety of slideshow documentary films and creative plays including the Chinese adaptation of *Letters from the South*. Over 6,000 people viewed these slideshows, and County officials also distributed over 540 collections of ‘support Vietnam, resist America’ songbooks and 620 small propaganda posters.

From Bin County to cities like Xi’an to provinces like Shaanxi all across the PRC, *American Invaders* and the other audio-visual propaganda forms accompanying it brought Vietnam into the sights and sounds of regular everyday life. People need not travel far to take in the exhibition’s images, many of which were about China’s own contributions to the Vietnamese cause itself, and they could do so alongside their fellow compatriots and townspeople. *American Invaders* seemed to, all at once, provide a glimpse of the horrors and glory of the ongoing Vietnamese struggle, act as a mirror through which Chinese observers could delight in their own revolutionary narcissism, and provide a forum in which they could feel part of the great Chinese backup force, ready to assist the world revolutionary struggle in whatever large or small, global or local, way that they could.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 158.

With *American Invaders, Get Out of Vietnam* found to be so compelling for Chinese audiences, it seemed an obvious choice to forge ahead with still more photo exhibitions. Indeed, the CCP was far from the only one paying attention. Both the regime in Hanoi and the NLF were keen to partner up with Beijing to see if they might co-produce, or at least arrange exchanges of, photo exhibitions depicting the Vietnamese struggle in all its facets. The fruits of their various collaborations were borne out in December 1965. The joint PRC-DRV exhibition *20 Years of Construction and Battle for the DRV* toured a handful of major cities across China.⁸⁸

That month also saw a 323-image exhibition titled *Southern Vietnam Forges Ahead Toward Victory* tour select PRC cities. The brainchild of the NLF permanent representatives to the PRC, the collection featured a number of photos dedicated to China's own 'support Vietnam, resist America' efforts, including shots of mass rallies across PRC cities and stills from Chinese stage plays celebrating Vietnam. The exhibition, and the partnership from which it derived, seemed to be mutually beneficial – an important part of the NLF's "diplomatic revolution" to internationalize its struggle, while also serving the CCP's domestic needs of brining the global realm to bear on local China and drum up popular political support in the process.⁸⁹

DRV officials in Hanoi were also eager to develop such an arrangement. In fact, viewing the Chinese appeal of *American Invaders*, Hanoi actually requested the exhibition travel to the DRV, which it did in the summer of 1965. By December, Hanoi was pleased to reciprocate and

⁸⁸ See Shaanxisheng Wenhua ju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui Xi'an Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Xi'an Municipal Chapter], Xi'an shi Wenhua ju [Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu juban 'Yuenan minhu gongheguo ershi nian jianshe he zhandou' tupian zhanlan de anpai yijian [Planning Views on Holding the '20 Years of Construction and Battle in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam' Photo Exhibition]," December 14, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-704, p. 88-89, and Duiwai Wenhua Lianluo Weiyuanhui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee], "Guanyu juban 'Yuenan minhu gongheguo ershi nian jianshe he zhandou' tupian zhanlan de tongzhi [Notice on Holding the '20 Years of Construction and Battle in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam' Photo Exhibition]," September 20, 1965, SMA C37-2-140, 31-32.

⁸⁹ Here, I am borrowing a phrase from Matthew Connolly's analysis of the Algerian Civil War, and the critical efforts of the Front de Libération Nationale to gain international attention for their struggle, thereby circumventing the French on the diplomatic battlefield if not the military battlefield. See Matthew Connolly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

dispatched an exhibition to the PRC which placed China front and center of events in Vietnam. The exhibition featured photographs taken by Vietnamese photographers of Chinese efforts of support to their struggle against the U.S.⁹⁰ Based on photos taken during their visit to the PRC in the fall of 1964 as the post-Tonkin Gulf Incident wave of support was just commencing, this exhibition toured a number of Chinese cities. Its ten-day run in Xi'an drew in nearly 22,000 viewers, attesting to the power of China's attraction to gazing at its own revolutionary image.

By the end of 1965, millions of Chinese citizens had visited photo exhibitions dedicated to internationalist events and capturing images of the wider world. Roaming the exhibition hall, digesting the images, reading the captions, these people were sharing a visceral experience that helped permit them to feel themselves part of something bigger than themselves, bigger even than China. Still many tens of millions more followed these exhibitions as they were meticulously covered in national newspapers and on nationwide radio broadcasts. The world

⁹⁰ See Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Xiehui [Central Foreign Cultures Liaison Committee] and Zhongguo Sheying Xuehui [Chinese Film Association], "Guanyu juban Yuenan sheying daibiaotuan fanghua sheying zhanlan de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Holding the 'Vietnamese Photographer Representatives Visit the PRC' Photo Exhibition]," December 21, 1965 and Zhongguo Yuenan Youhao Xiehui [Sino-Vietnam Friendship Association] and Zhongguo Sheying Xuehui [Chinese Film Association], "Guanyu juban Yuenan sheying daibiaotuan fanghua sheying zhanlan de baogao [Report Regarding Holding the 'Vietnamese Photographer Representatives Visit the PRC' Photo Exhibition]," September 22, 1965 and Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui Xi'an Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Xi'an Municipal Chapter] and Zhongguo Sheying Xuehuiyuan Xi'an Fen Chouweihui [Chinese Film Association Xi'an Chapter Committee], "Guanyu juban Yuenan sheying daibiaotuan fanghua sheying zhanlan de jihua [Plans Regarding Holding the 'Vietnamese Photographer Representatives Visit the PRC' Photo Exhibition]," February 1, 1966 and Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Xiehui Xi'an Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Xi'an Municipal Chapter] and Zhongguo Sheying Xuehuiyuan Xi'an Fen Chouweihui [Chinese Film Association Xi'an Chapter Committee], "Guanyu juban 《Yuenan sheying daibiaotuan fanghua sheying zhanlan》 qingkuang de baogao [Report Regarding Holding the 'Vietnamese Photographer Representatives Visit the PRC' Photo Exhibition]," February 25, 1966, SXPA, 196-1-300, 35-42, and Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Wenhua Youhao Xiehui Shanghai Fenhui [Foreign Cultures Friendship Association Shanghai Municipal Chapter], "Guanyu Yuenan sheying daibitoatuan fanghua sheying zhanlan de wenjian [File Regarding the 'Vietnamese Photographer Representatives Visit the PRC' Photo Exhibition]," March 1966, SMA, C37-2-148.

beyond China's shores, a world turning in its favor, was brought to the eyes and ears of people all across the country.

But the power of this medium was deeper still. For though these exhibitions claimed to be about the world, and the majority of their pictures did indeed capture foreign faces and cultures, their hopes and struggles, they were also deeply about China. How China related to the world, how the world needed China, its revolution, and its people to succeed. Photos of Chinese leaders celebrated abroad or of mass rallies supporting Vietnam from across PRC cities both claimed to be principally about those foreign countries. But, as the very fact they were then incorporated into *domestically* deployed photo exhibitions attests, these were first and foremost, by, for, and about China and the Chinese people. While photo exhibitions and documentary films would hinge largely on stimulating audiences visually, the auidial soundscape was no less critical to developing a truly robust strategy of *domestic internationalism*.

The World Across the Chinese Soundscape: Internationalist Songs and Musicals

Internationalist themes and global events travelled considerably across the Chinese soundscape in the 1960s. In Mao's China, state radio broadcasts expectedly played a critical role in bringing stories from around the world down to local China, colored by the Party's interpretation of these events along the way. But while the importance of radio as a component piece of *domestic internationalism* should not be understated, the internationalist song has been almost entirely forgotten as a mainstay of PRC life during this period.

This section, while not a comprehensive account of internationalism across this Chinese soundscape, seeks to resurrect music from this period treating global events in Vietnam, the wider Third World, and beyond. It does so first by treating individual examples of such

internationalist songs, exploring their themes and the myriad ways in which they were disseminated, including published songbooks and music-based periodicals. I then look at how these songs were incorporated into political training programs and shared collective experiences like Party-orchestrated singing competitions and festivals.

This section then explores original Chinese internationalist musicals, which marshaled a host of songs and dances to depict Third World revolution across a number of countries, the war in Vietnam, and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. As this section demonstrates, internationalist songs were an essential and creative method of teaching Chinese people about the world and China's place within it, and a critical part of the effort to give these people a direct and contributing role to play in a movement of global importance.

Original Chinese songs celebrating events around the world, though not unique to the 1960s, flourished during this period. Songs about the Vietnamese struggle and those cherishing the broad theme of Third World unity, though by no means the only internationalist ditties of the era, took center stage in this trend. Amidst the 'support Vietnam, resist America' tide from mid-1964 through mid-1965, songs were an important means to alert the Chinese population to events there, and to bring them into the collective experience of practicing world revolution from home.

But songs championing the Vietnamese cause had begun to emerge even earlier in the decade. Throughout 1962-63, Vietnam entered Chinese song through selections including "War Song of the Vietnamese People" (1963), "Song for the Armed People of Vietnam" (1963), "Young People, Rise Up and Liberate the South" (1963), and "Song for Vietnam" (1962)

performed at the 1963 National Day celebrations in Shanghai.⁹¹ The following year, the trickle of songs became a stream. Tunes including “The Chinese and Vietnamese People Fight Shoulder-to-Shoulder” (1964) and “Be Ready for Battle at Any Time” (1964) sought to forge a connection between fighting in Vietnam and the war scare for the PRC, while “Reading *Letters from the South*” (1964) aimed to strategically cross-reference another work of propaganda in the Party’s toolbox. The 1964 National Day festivities in Shanghai sought to have Vietnam speak to a wider breadth of the Chinese population, deploying the song “Young Women, Come to the Military Training Ground” (1964) which championed the contribution of young female guerilla fighters in Vietnam.⁹²

As the trope of Vietnam firmly entered everyday PRC life throughout 1964-66, a host of songs emerged bearing titles and lyrics which reproduced verbatim the discourse the Party itself used to discuss events there. Songs such as “Sharing a Bitter Hatred for the Enemy, We Vow to Be Your Backup Force” (1965), “The Vietnamese People Fight Well” (1966), and “U.S. Imperialism, Get Out of Vietnam” all replicated the phraseology the Party laid out in other settings, most notably in prepared slogans at mass events where these songs were also to be sung as part of the day’s schedule.⁹³ In these cases, and not unlike the mass chanting of the slogans themselves, the Party was giving people the language necessary to talk and sing about Vietnam, and then providing the opportunity. As the 1966 tune “The Sounds of Our Singing Flies South” suggests, the singing of these songs were deemed to constitute a direct and concrete act of

⁹¹ Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu chunjie, wuyi, guoqing yanchu ji zuzhi wanhui de jihua [Plans, Reports, and Views Regarding Spring Festival, International Worker’s Day, and National Day Performances and Organizing Evening Events],” undated, SMA, B172-5-720, 101.

⁹² Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu jiemu yanchu he peihei zhengzhi xuanchuan yanchu huodong de anpai qingkuang huibao, jiemubiao [Reports and Programs Regarding Performances and Artistic Activities Accompanying Political Propaganda],” undated, SMA, B172-5-839, 179.

⁹³ See, for example, Shaanxisheng Wenhuaaju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], “1966 nian chunjie xuanchuan, gongzuo jihua, yanchu gongzuobao [Propaganda, Work Plans, and Performances During the 1966 Spring Festival],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-769, 5-6, regarding the performance of “The Vietnamese People Fight Well” at the Xi’an 1966 Spring Festival celebrations for Chinese New Year.

support for the Vietnamese people, and was thought to impact their efforts there. Over “Golden Pheasant Ridge,” past “Friendship Pass,” and across the “Red River,” this song’s lyrics pledged, would be carried its celebration of China’s Vietnamese comrades-in-arms.⁹⁴

But Vietnam was far from the only internationalist trope celebrated in PRC song in the 1960s. The unity of all progressive peoples across the broad Third World also inspired an array of songs and performances, beginning most prominently with “Solidarity is Strength” (1962). The following year saw the emergence of similarly themed ditties, including “March of the Anti-Imperialist Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America” (1963), and “Our Revolutionary Friends are Many” (1963). As 1963’s “All Oppressed Peoples Around the World, Rise Up” promised, the “rage” all of “us” colonial victims shares “has already transformed into a thunderbolt.”⁹⁵ Indeed, these songs regularly pledged to Chinese audiences the existence of a transnational community of revolutionary peoples spread across the Third World, with whom the Chinese people were friends.

Songs like “The Sounds of Our Singing Flies Across Africa, Asia, and Latin America” (1964) and “Our Friends Are Spread All Under Heaven” (1964) promised Chinese listeners of the importance of their actions and place within the world, while “The Raging Flames of Revolution are Burning All Across Africa, Asia, and Latin America” (1965) ensured them the world was indeed turning in favor of their broad, revolutionary community. While these tunes were regularly performed at major mass rallies and holiday celebrations, they were also an important part of ceremonies and events held in honor of visiting ‘foreign friends.’⁹⁶ Arguably

⁹⁴ “The Sounds of Our Singing Flies South” in *Yinyue Chuangzuo [Music Creation]*, 2 (1966), 28. Golden Pheasant Ridge, Friendship Pass, and the Red River are all geographic designations either in PRC territory (in the Guangxi Autonomous Region along the Sino-Vietnamese border) or straddling the shared PRC-North Vietnam border.

⁹⁵ “All Oppressed Peoples Around the World, Rise Up” in *Ge Qu [Songs]*, 5 (1963), 4.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Shanghai Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu jiemu yanchu he peihe zhengzhi xuanchuan yanchu huodong de anpai qingkuang huibao, jiemubiao [Reports and Programs Regarding Performances and Artistic Activities Accompanying Political Propaganda],” undated, SMA, B172-5-839,

the two odes to the Third World enjoying the best circulation were “All Peoples of the World Unite” (1964) and “The Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America Want Liberation” (1964), and both were sung widely at mass events over the ensuing years.⁹⁷

Beyond such songs about the broad Third World community, other pieces worked to more specifically target regions within this designation. Among them, the nebulous locale of “Africa” was a common character. “Our Homeland is in Black Africa” (1964) received regular play, as did “Fight On, Africa” (1963), “The Tempest Over Africa” (1964), and “Ode to Africa” (1965). Other songs, including “The Roar of Africa” (1963) and “The Drumbeats of Africa” (1964), emphasized an essentialized version of the continent and its people, lending itself well to suggesting to Chinese listeners the existence of a world revolutionary movement across exotic Third World venues. Still others, like 1964’s “Africa, I Say to You,” highlighted the continent’s recent entry to the revolutionary community in which the Chinese people were seasoned veterans. Africa was, these songs confirmed, rising up and prepared to follow the revolutionary path China had helped to break. Or, as the lyrics of “The Drumbeats of Africa” euphemistically put it, “the East wind beats on the war drum.”⁹⁸

Latin America too was poised to advance along this revolutionary roadmap. In the early 1960s, songs like “Protect Cuba” (1963) and “Heroic People of Cuba, We Support You!” (1962) ushered in the country’s socialist regime and lauded its persistent irritation of Washington. By

179 and Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Shanghaishi wenhuaaju yanchuchu gongzuo jihua ji you anpai diaopei jutuan yanchu de baogao [Report on the Work Plans of the Shanghai Bureau of Culture Performance Office and Planned Allocations for Performances],” undated, SMA, B172-5-993, 101.

⁹⁷ See, for example, *Ibid.*, and Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu ‘wuyi’ qijian wenhua huodong anpai qingkuang jianbao [Briefing Regarding Planning Circumstances for Cultural Activities During the International Worker’s Day Period],” April 25, 1966, BMA, 164-002-00017, 2. Indeed, “All Peoples of the World Unite” was so popular by 1965 that it became one of a select group of 13 revolutionary songs the CCP actively promoted and pushed to have played widely (see Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture] et al., “Guanyu changhao hongqi zazhi 1965 nian disanqi shang kandeng de shisan shou geming gequ de tongzhi [Notice Regarding Singing the 13 Revolutionary Songs from Hongqi’s 1965, No. 3 Edition],” April 1965, BMA, 100-001-00951, 8-9, and *Hongqi* [Red Flag], 3 (1965), 31)

⁹⁸ “The Drumbeats of Africa” in *Yinyue Chuangzuo* [Music Creation], 4 (1964), 3.

1965, however, the Chinese scope of the region broadened with ditties like “The People of Venezuela Want Liberation” (1964), “People of Panama, Rise Up” (1964), “Hold High the Panamanian Flag” (1964), “Dominican Republic, Fight On” (1965) and “Dominican Republic, China is With You” (1965). Like both Panama and the Dominican Republic, the Congo too was unsurprisingly fashioned into song-form not long after Mao issued his statement on events there.

Though a song in praise of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba had emerged in 1962, after Mao’s December 1964 statement several tunes emerged in short order. “U.S. and Belgian Imperialism Get Out of the Congo (Leopoldville)” (1964), “Throw Lyndon Johnson Out of the Congo (Leopoldville)” (1964), and “The Just Struggle Will Surely Succeed” (1964) all gave Chinese audiences the words and sounds to voice their support. “Six hundred million Chinese people,” “The Just Struggle” rang out, “stand on your side.”⁹⁹ As the relationship between race and (neo-) colonial oppression was worked out in songs praising the Congo, this theme was also brought to Chinese audiences through music treating the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

Though the African-American classic “Old Man River” was performed in China widely throughout 1962 and 1963, Mao’s August 1963 statement of support following the Birmingham demonstrations ushered in a wave of songs championing the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁰⁰ That year, the PRC was awash with “Black Americans Want Freedom” (1963), “Black Brothers, Rise with Force and Fight” (1963), and “Brave Blacks, Advance Toward Washington” (1963). The unabashedly direct “How Many More Blacks Must Be Murdered?” (1963), dedicated to four black children killed during the events in Birmingham, laid out for listeners the African-American dilemma: “We do not want to resort to violence, but what do we receive in return? /

⁹⁹ “The Just Struggle Will Surely Succeed” in *Yinyue Chuangzuo [Music Creation]*, 12 (1964), 7.

¹⁰⁰ In the spring of 1963, U.S. Civil Rights Movement leaders engaged in a sustained campaign in Birmingham, Alabama with the intention of drawing attention to that city’s especially draconian enforcement of racial segregation. When demonstrating black students were assaulted by local police armed with attack dogs and high-pressure water hoses, observers in the U.S. and around the world were horrified.

Either starving in prison or the hangman's noose.”¹⁰¹ Though, by 1963, the Movement in the U.S. had not yet splintered into factions and was still largely committed to the non-violent approach tabled by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Chinese songs sought to frame the issue within the global context of a non-white world struggling for liberation from racist, oppressive, and colonial-style rule.

These many internationalist songs from China's 1960s made their way to Chinese listeners in a number of ways. Though mass events and radio broadcasts played a large role in their dissemination and normalization throughout these years, widely published songbooks also significantly aided their distribution. These books would offer up a unifying theme, marshaling a dozen or so related songs all in a small, pocket-sized collection. The September 1963 songbook *All the World's Proletarian, Unite*, published by the Music Press of Beijing, self-described as “selected mass songs,” a designation which effectively suggested these songs were organic productions of the Chinese people while also inviting readers to sing these tunes at their leisure, individually or as a group ideally.¹⁰² The 45-page collection was adorned with an illustration of a muscular black man breaking out of the shackles that once bound his hands, and contained 26 songs, among them “Africa Will Certainly Win.”

The songbook *Fight On, Awakened Africa!*, published in April 1964, took a similar approach, its cover art featuring an African person banging on a war drum while compatriots forge ahead in battle in the background.¹⁰³ The collection contained 15 songs, most summoning continent-wide struggle, others championing specific causes in Angola, Ghana, Algeria, Guinea

¹⁰¹ “How Many More Blacks Must Be Murdered?” in *Yinyue Chuangzuo* [Music Creation], 10 (1963), 1-2.

¹⁰² Yinyue Chubanshe Bianjibu [Music Press Editorial Department], *Quan Shijie Wuchanzhe Lianhe Qilai: Qunzhong Gequ Xuan* [All the World's Proletarian, Unite: Selected Mass Songs], (Beijing: Yinyue chubanshe [Music Press], 1963).

¹⁰³ Yinyue Chubanshe Bianjibu [Music Press Editorial Department]. *Zhandou Ba, Juexing de Feizhou!: Zhichi Feizhou Renmin Geming Douzheng Gequ Xuanji* [Fight On, Awakened Africa!: Selected Songs in Support of the African People's Revolutionary Struggles], (Beijing: Yinyue chubanshe [Music Press], 1964).

and the Congo. Notably, half of the songs were Chinese originals, while the other half were from the African countries listed above, as well as Somalia, Cameroon, and Zanzibar.

Songbooks dedicated to the Vietnamese cause were unsurprisingly plentiful. Given the sheer bounty of musical offerings produced by Chinese musicians in response to events in Vietnam, these collections were thick in form and rich in content. The 1964 book *Vietnamese Soldiers Fight Well*, for example, featured a variety of musical and dramatic offerings, including rhythmic storytelling (*shulaibao*), one drum-based spoken ballad, a Shandong clapper ballad (*Shandong kuaishu*), a Tianjin clapper song (*Tianjin kuaiban*), a Beijing-style music-accompanied story, one ballad supported by a string arrangement, and a concluding comic dialogue (*xiangsheng*).¹⁰⁴ These songs and poems merged the Vietnamese struggle with Chinese artistic forms, introducing PRC audiences to the wider world in novel yet familiar ways.

Such works continued throughout 1965, with Beijing's Music Press publishing a two-volume set offering a total of 60-songs.¹⁰⁵ These ditties were comprised of Chinese originals, Vietnamese songs, as well as Southern Vietnamese tunes largely based on capturing the guerilla experience there. These songbooks, nearly all of which were sold at nationwide Xinhua bookstores, brought internationalist songs to people all across the PRC. By offering them the words and melodies of these tunes, these texts encouraged readers and listeners to take up the reigns of producing, and reproducing, this strategic internationalist propaganda themselves. In so doing, they were given a distinct role to play in the cultural battlefield of world revolution.

¹⁰⁴ Quyi Zazhi She [Arts Magazine Agency], *Yuenan Junmin Dade Hao: Zhiyuan Yuenan KangMei Douzheng Wenyi Jiemu* [*Vietnamese Soldiers Fight Well: A Program of Entertainment in Support of Vietnam and in Struggle to Resist America*], (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe [Chinese Theatre Press], 1964).

¹⁰⁵ Yinyue Chubanshe Bianjibu [Music Press Editorial Department], *Zhandou Ba, Yingxiong de Yuenan!: Zhichi Yuenan Renmin FanMei Zhengyi Douzheng Gequ Xuanji* [*Fight On, Heroic Vietnam!: Selected Songs in Support of the Just, Anti-American Struggle of the Vietnamese People*] (Beijing: Yinyue chubanshe [Music Press], 1965), and Yinyue Chubanshe Bianjibu [Music Press Editorial Department], *Shengli Shuyu Yingxiong de Yuenan Renmin: Zhichi Yuenan Renmin KangMei Jiuguo Douzheng Gequ Xuan Di'erji* [*Victory Belongs to the Heroic Vietnamese People: Selected Songs in Support of the Anti-American Struggle of the Vietnamese People to Rescue Their Nation, Volume 2*], (Beijing: Yinyue chubanshe [Music Press], 1965).

This role would be further enhanced and emphasized through collective singing events and political training sessions assembled regularly throughout these years.

It comes as no surprise that alongside documentary films and photo exhibitions songs too were integrated as forms of internationalist propaganda for political training sessions. In spelling out its approach to “current affairs education” (*xingshi jiaoyu*) in a 1965 report, propaganda officials at Hetian Middle School in Shanghai called for singing revolutionary songs and performing revolutionary plays to be “increased and done more vigorously.”¹⁰⁶ Thinking specifically about the ‘support Vietnam, resist America’ campaign, alongside teaching students how to craft their own propaganda posters and shout slogans, they should be taught how to sing songs championing the Vietnamese cause.¹⁰⁷ Following that, singing orientated activities and events should be organized, where students would have the chance to put their voices to action.¹⁰⁸

For those unable to attend a collective singing activity, the Party made sure to broadcast musical and other artistic events on television. Between August 1964 and May 1965, Shanghai television offered 17 such broadcasts in support of Vietnam alone.¹⁰⁹ But in-person collective singing events were always preferable, given their greater capacity for forging a sense of unity, solidarity, and community amongst those in attendance, all sharing one choral voice.

Propaganda officials assigned to the Shanghai Electric Cable Factory felt similarly, and were keen to organize for their workers both mass singing occasions, as well as singing

¹⁰⁶ Zhonggong Hetian Zhongxue Zhibu Wei yuanhui [Hetian Middle School Party Branch Committee], “Dazhua xingshi jiaoyu, cujin jiaoxue gaige—women shi zenyang xiang shisheng jinxing xingshi jiaoyu de [Grab Hold of Situational Education, Spur Reform in Education—How We Engage in Situational Education for Students and Teachers],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 227.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 230.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 231.

¹⁰⁹ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Shanghaishi qunzhongxing yuan Yue kang Mei zhezhong tongji shuzi (cong 1964 nian 8 yue zhi 1965 nian 5 yue 20 ri) [Statistical Figures Regarding Shanghai’s Mass ‘Support Vietnam, Resist America’ Campaign (August 1964 to May 20, 1965)],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1295, 101.

competitions.¹¹⁰ Neither the Electric Cable Factory nor Shanghai itself were alone in recognizing the strategic opportunity afforded by such collective events and excuses to sing.

In October 1963, Beijing Department of Propaganda and Communist Youth League officials organized a competition for performing revolutionary songs. As organizing officials spelled out, the hope was such an event would go a long way toward assisting the people's "education in class struggle, socialism, patriotism, and internationalism" while "strengthening their revolutionary solidarity."¹¹¹ Similar events continued in the capital well into 1965 and beyond. One spring 1965 event there called for an artistic festival specifically designed for young children. The event called for all kinds of artistic performance, so long as they were "terse but forceful" so that children might enjoy them.¹¹² Short chorus songs, solo songs, allegro tunes, cross-talk comic dialogue, poetry recitals, dance musicals, and short skits were all deemed to fit this bill. Regarding content, tales of revolutionary heroism were to be privileged, and officials thus wanted to integrate heroic stories of events from Vietnam, Korea, and the Congo "to help youngsters to follow the national liberation struggles of their revolutionary brothers."¹¹³ This will then "help children to, from a very young age, have sympathy for and support the revolutionary struggles of the world's people." These goals of including internationalist songs and performance, were also thought to serve the event's larger ends of

Foster[ing] [young people's] passion for the Party, for Chairman Mao, and for socialism,... help[ing] build their hatred for class enemies,... cultivat[ing] their love for labor,... help[ing] them understand collectivism and solidarity and frugality while squashing selfishness.

¹¹⁰ See Zhonggong Shanghai Dianlanchang Wei Yuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Electric Cable Factory Propaganda Department], "Yunyong duozhong duoyang xuanchuan fangshi xiang zhigong jinxing shishi jiaoyu [Use All Kinds of Propaganda Forms to Engage Workers in Current Affairs Education]," undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 263.

¹¹¹ Gongqinguan Xuanwu Quwei [Communist Youth League Xuanwu District Committee] et al., "Lianhe juban quanqu geming gequ yanchu bisai de tongzhi [Notice on Jointly Holding the Revolutionary Singing Competition in the Region]," September 3, 1963, BMA, 100-003-01429, 122.

¹¹² Beijingshi Wenhua ju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture] et al., "Guanyu juban 1965 nian Beijingshi chengshi diqu xiaoxuesheng wenyi huiyan de lianhe tongzhi [Joint Notice Regarding Holding Artistic Performances for Elementary Students in Beijing in 1965]," March 25, 1965, BMA, 100-001-00951, 5.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Chinese youth were the future of the revolution, and internationalist songs were an effective means of ensuring they grasped the values the Party hoped for them.

Shanghai's practice of collective singing events was scarcely different. In the spring of 1965, several prominent groups including the Bureaus of Culture and of Education and the Shanghai Women's Association came together to organize the Mass Singing Competition. The event was massive in scale, and amongst the myriad songs performed were a host of internationalist tunes, including "Ferociously Attack the American Wolves," "Intensify Production in Support of Vietnam," and the ubiquitous "All Peoples of the World Unite."¹¹⁴ In another event that August, the city's many middle and high school students performed revolutionary songs. Among the selections that evening were "Lyndon Johnson's Ugly Appearance," performed as a creative story-telling interspersed with song, and "Vietnam Will Certainly Win," the evening's coda performed as a short lyric by students from Yishan Middle School.¹¹⁵

As this event well illustrates, song and performance were both integral to using aural and visual mediums in the practice of *domestic internationalism*. If songs and music gave audiences the words and sounds of world revolution and anti-imperialist struggle, performance gave those on stage *and* those in the crowd a role to play within the larger practice of that

¹¹⁴ Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "1965 nian Shanghaishi qunzhong (zhigong bufen) geyong bisai chuanguo gequ bisai (diyichang) jiemudan [Program for the 1965 Shanghai Mass (Workers) Singing and Song Composition Competition (First Act)]," December 4, 1965 and Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "1965 nian Shanghaishi qunzhong (zhigong bufen) geyong bisai chuanguo gequ bisai (di'erchang) jiemudan [Program for the 1965 Shanghai Mass (Workers) Singing and Song Composition Competition (Second Act)]," December 5, 1965 and Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "1965 nian Shanghaishi qunzhong (zhigong bufen) geyong bisai chuanguo gequ bisai (disanchang) jiemudan [Program for the 1965 Shanghai Mass (Workers) Singing and Song Composition Competition (Third Act)]," December 6, 1965, SMA, B172-5-972, 40-45.

¹¹⁵ Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Shanghaishi 1965 nian zhongdeng yishang xuexiao xuesheng wenyi (chuanguo jiemu) huiyan bufen jiemu huibao yanchu jiemudan [Report and Performance Program for the 1965 Shanghai Middle and High School Student Artistic Recital (List of Creative Works)]," undated, SMA, B172-5-972, 63.

struggle. They were indeed doing their part as members of the world revolutionary backup force, eager to offer moral support and ready to spring into battle at a moment's notice. For these reasons, the internationalist musical emerged as another important element on this audio-visual frontline.

By far the most all encompassing and dynamic of the internationalist musicals the emerging during China's 1960s was *Ode to the Tempest*. Subtitled "A Musical About the Anti-American Struggle of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America," *Ode* first emerged in July 1965. In performance, it clocked in at over two hours and included over 300 different dramatic roles played by 70 unique actors.¹¹⁶ The work was a product of the Hunan Folk Musical Troupe based out of southern China, though its script was later published by Music Press and circulated nationally via state-run Xinhua bookstores. At its core, *Ode* tells the story of the international situation in the 1960s. Over 24 songs woven together with brief narrated passages to help set the changing geographic context, the musical brought together a wide array of different international struggles to depict a coherent story of a world changing; a world turning, at last, in favor of the world's progressive peoples.

Ode opens with an editor's forward laying out this overarching thesis. "The four seas churn with the clouds and rains of rage," it commences, "the five continents shake as the tempest surges – this is the authentic description of the international class struggle in the 1960s."¹¹⁷ People all around the world, it goes on, have "no choice but to" wage violent struggle to "protect the freedom and independence of their nations" and even "secure their right to exist." "Become

¹¹⁶ See *Wu Dao [Dance]*, 4 (1965), 19.

¹¹⁷ Hunan Sheng Minjian Gewutuan [Hunan Provincial Folk Musical Troupe], *Ode to the Tempest: A Musical About the Anti-American Struggle of the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America*, (Beijing: Yinyue chubanshe [Music Press], 1966), forward.

filled,” readers are instructed, “with unsurpassed rage and hatred” for the enemy and “unparalleled respect for the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.” The play, its editors then explain, is designed to illustrate how “the awakened peoples” are “undefeatable,” and it is only these people who are the true “impregnable fortress.” We must thus “support one another” and “forge ahead valiantly” in unified struggle. For Chinese audiences, *Ode* would be a call to arms – if one was not already familiar with the various worldwide sites of struggle, here was an artful and didactic lesson. Moreover, by presenting these locales as theatres in a single, coherent war against imperialist exploitation and oppression, the musical offered audiences a simplified and readily intelligible reading of the world designed to more easily resonate with them.

From the forward, *Ode to the Tempest* sets off to examine various worldwide struggles “against the rotten and decaying old world.”¹¹⁸ The journey begins in Asia, where musical offerings champion, in succession, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Japan and North Korea. Before moving forward, however, one song is dedicated to the Palestinian cause, as the actors on stage wander through the desert, yearning for their stolen homeland. From the Middle East, *Ode* moves to the familiar tropes of the Congo and the Dominican Republic. While the Congolese “beasts of burden” are depicted emerging from the jungle to the sounds of war drums, in the Dominican Republic a guerrilla force sets out and destroys a U.S. military gas refilling station.¹¹⁹

At this point in the musical, the scene shifts to the White House. A windstorm thrashes against the walls of the building, and a “mountain of fire” swells beneath the President’s “throne,” as the song “We Absolutely Will Never Waver” is performed.¹²⁰ After returning to Vietnam, where no less than 9 songs are performed, *Ode* concludes with a stunning scene set at Tiananmen Square in Beijing. There, millions of Chinese people are gathered in a mass rally to

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹²⁰ Ibid.,

hear an address to the crowd from Chairman Mao. After a single song about the PRC's fight to liberate Taiwan, the narrator reels off a series of slogans of support for all the countries previously depicted in the musical, as well as for Panama and for the African-American cause. Here, the dramatic action captures *all* of the recent internationalist mass events that have taken place in the PRC over the past several months and years. Though those mass events happened very recently, they have now entered the annals of world revolutionary history, as depicted here on stage.

The narrator succeeds the slogans saying, "Mao's voice of support is the voice of support for all 650 million Chinese people."¹²¹ As such, he goes on, "Mao's statements of support *bring together* the revolutionary will of the world's people, and *encourage* the revolutionary struggle of the world's people."¹²² Though these struggles are being waged around the world for just causes by heroic local peoples, viewers were being told, it was Mao's voice – itself the voice of the Chinese people – that brings these disparate struggles together, and encourages these far-off peoples to forge ahead with their fight. Mao's statements are capped by the song "Chairman Mao's Voice of Support is the Flag of Battle," which calls for revolutionary people to unite and bring about a "new heaven and earth (*xintiandi*)." Indeed, the scene in front of Tiananmen also occasioned the narrator to remind all 650 million Chinese people to "sharpen your swords and polish your rifles," making all necessary preparations to serve as Vietnam's backup force.

Not unlike certain internationalist documentary films and photo exhibitions, *Ode to the Tempest* was ostensibly about events abroad, while actually dedicating a significant degree of its focus to capturing how *China* responded to those events, and reproducing them for a Chinese audience. Even in internationalist musicals, therefore, the PRC's support for world revolution

¹²¹ Ibid., 8.

¹²² Ibid. (emphasis mine)

became itself part of the narrative of world revolution; *domestic internationalism* was working to recycle its own previous efforts. In the process, it helped to erase its own role in manufacturing these very popular Chinese responses to foreign events. If internationalist mass events, as one example, were not organic and spontaneous products of the Chinese people's will, depicting them in musicals like *Ode to the Tempest* as such could only help strengthen and fortify this myth. Owing to this power, *Ode* was not the only musical of its kind.

In fact, the musical *Remain in Combat Readiness* seemed to take this strategy even further. First performed midway through 1965, the opening of this 5-act, 10-scene large-scale musical appeared to commence a tale about the recent U.S. military escalations in Vietnam. The story begins with a depiction of guerilla efforts in South Vietnam.¹²³ By the second act the action has abruptly shifted to China. More specifically, the viewer is taken to the southern Chinese autonomous region of Guangxi, which shares a long border with North Vietnam. There, former Chinese guerillas from the War of Resistance against Japan participate in mass protest against U.S. actions in Vietnam. The next act examines Chinese working people there engaging in various 'support Vietnam, resist America' activities, and building the 'Friendship Bridge' to North Vietnam to facilitate the transport of goods for the war effort. Again dramatizing a cross-reference to another distinct form of *domestic internationalism*, the various Chinese characters hear radio broadcasts about Vietnamese military victories and they rejoice and cheer.¹²⁴

Continuing to round out the full cross-section of Chinese society, *Remain* next moves to a Chinese commune along the Sino-Vietnamese border. There, in an effort to support Vietnam's war effort, commune members strive to boost production, even participating in a production competition with others in the region. Within the commune, women in particular are held up as

¹²³ See *Wu Dao [Dance]*, 6 (1965), 9.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

regularly hauling massive grain yields. The musical's final act depicts the 'entire nation in arms, remain in combat readiness' (*quanminjiebing yanzhenyidai*) campaign that formed a component part of the larger 'support Vietnam, resist America' effort. The people of this Guangxi town tirelessly train themselves in preparation for potential battle, and an old man helps a young child developed a hatred for the enemy whilst shooting targets.

In a scene reminiscent of *Ode to the Tempest's* euphoric culmination, *Remain's* epilogue features an entire People's Militia unit standing in front of the gate at Tiananmen Square, alongside members of the Chinese military. Though one reviewer lauded *Remain* for "captur[ing] well the Guangxi people's immense power to achieve an 'entire nation in arms' and a surging tide of production amidst living on the very frontline of the 'support Vietnam, resist America' frontline," the play's lasting impression was certainly not intended to be Guangxi-specific.¹²⁵ Instead, the musical set out to bring all parts of the PRC to the Sino-Vietnamese frontline, and even cross over that frontier. As with Vietnam-themed photo exhibitions in practice dedicating a large number of images to capturing scenes of Chinese support for Vietnam, the PRC was co-opting the war there, making it its very own. Through the clever manipulation of a vast array of audio-visual mediums, the Party was making 'support Vietnam, resist America' a war unto itself – one in which the PRC played the central and decisive role, drawing upon its own historical experience and its place of unparalleled significance in the world revolutionary movement.

Though *Ode to the Tempest* and *Remain in Combat Readiness* carried the most overtly Sinocentric content, they were not the only internationalist musicals in China's 1960s. Since dramatic song and dance worked so well to combine the Party's reading of the world with popularly cherished dramatic forms to keep audiences enthralled, it was an obvious choice for

¹²⁵ Ibid.

CCP propagandists to continue encouraging musicians, choreographers and dramatists to keep producing such works. While these musicals would be followed up by 1966's *The Raging Congo River* (discussed further in Chapter 4), they were also preceded by the 1964 piece, *Burning Flames of Fury*.¹²⁶ *Burning Flames* offers a stunning portrayal of African-American oppression at the hands of a white America, seemingly unified in its racist hatred. While some black American characters appear in shackles and dressed as servants, white racism appears state-sanctioned and defended violently by white police officers. The musical culminates in a final scene of bloody clashes as the African-Americans cast bravely confronts members of the Klu Klux Klan who have set a giant crucifix ablaze on the front lawn of the Capitol Building.

The work's choreographers even intentionally incorporated African dance techniques (in addition to African-American dance movements), in a likely attempt to blur the line between European colonial racism in Africa and the historical oppression of African-Americans in the U.S. *Burning Flames* would go on to be fashioned into a short film, included alongside other revolutionary shorts in a collection entitled *Rising Sun in the East*.¹²⁷

The African-American struggle for freedom, this story told, was part of a larger movement - one inspired by events far to the East and sustained through the support of revolutionary peoples there. Though more subtly Sinocentric than *Ode* and *Remain*, *Burning Flames* was nevertheless fitted into the same narrative *domestic internationalism* was spinning through a variety of mediums, about a world revolutionary movement, a shared historical moment, and China's decisive role in these unprecedented events. Alongside internationalist

¹²⁶ I am grateful to Emily Wilcox for alerting me to *Burning Flames of Fury*. For her treatment of this musical, see Wilcox, "The Postcolonial Blind Spot," *positions: asia critique*, (forthcoming).

¹²⁷ See *Dazhong Dianying*, (1964) 8-9, 56.

songs, these musicals helped present this argument in an enthralling and entertaining way with which a newspaper or radio broadcast could never quite compare.

Conclusion

In the early-to-mid-1960s, a variety of different audio-visual mediums brought the world to the eyes and ears of people all across the PRC. Deploying a full array of such tools – documentary films, photo exhibitions, songs and musicals amongst many others – the Chinese Communist Party was providing for its constituents the fodder necessary to help them imagine a wider world. These captivating images and sounds, as well as the collective and shared experience of encountering them at an exhibition, screening, festival, or staging, helped conjure popular ideas of a vast, worldwide revolutionary community. Attendant to this, this visual and audial propaganda encouraged viewers and audience members to more easily establish a cognitive correlation between events occurring abroad and their own domestic actions at home in the PRC. There was – these films, photos, and songs insisted – a global ripple that followed the tasks, however mundane, one performed in their everyday, local existence.

But these sights and sounds also did something more. Owing to the fact they were never simply about the world beyond China, these tales helped Chinese audiences acquire a true appreciation for the importance, the significance, and the centrality of the PRC within the larger community of progressive peoples and world revolutionaries. Tapping into a deep and pervasive Chinese nationalism that preceded the PRC and China's socialist experiment, this audio-visual propaganda exploited the country's revolutionary narcissism. By offering them the chance to stare at their own reflection in the mirroring waters of world revolution abroad, the Party seemed to surmise, ordinary Chinese people could be brought to care deeply about events unfolding

there. Thereafter, in the name of supporting war in Vietnam, postcolonial development in Africa, or sovereign rights in Latin America, these people might boost more intensively industrial and agricultural production, follow more closely the Party's guiding hand, study more enthusiastically the works of Chairman Mao.

Whether by channeling Chinese mass events, conveying the adoration of Chinese leaders abroad, or through detailed treatments of the PRC's effort to 'support Vietnam, resist America,' audio-visual internationalist propaganda offered Chinese audiences a sense that China was right there, shoulder-to-shoulder with foreign friends, on the frontlines of world revolution. By commandeering these foreign struggles to emphasize the PRC's role in them, the Party gave the Chinese people a war to fight. This war, Chinese audiences understood, was one they were well positioned to fight, able as they were to draw on China's own historical victories over the horrors of western colonialism, unequal treaties, extraterritoriality, the stripping away of sovereignty, and of course Japanese aggression. China was a veteran of this struggle and now, PRC viewers were learning, progressive peoples around the world were clamoring to follow their path. Mao's China was the heartbeat at the center of a world tilting left, and Chinese audiences were seeing it with their own eyes, and hearing with their own ears.

Chapter 4: All the World's on Stage: World Revolution in the Chinese Cultural Sphere, 1962-66

To accomplish the formidable tasks of the international revolutionary struggle, the domestic socialist revolution, and the building of socialism here at home, we must rely on, and mobilize, the power of the broad masses. The musical arts and other artistic and cultural forms alike must shoulder the honourable task of using propaganda to mobilize the masses.¹

-Editorial Department, *People's Music* (c. 1966)

Dramatic artists of China, rise up! Write large plays, write small plays, write street corner plays, write radio plays, write 'living newspaper' plays, write small musicals, write about Vietnam, write about the anti-American struggle of all African-Asian-Latin American peoples, use all forms and all subject matter available in the weapon that is dramatic arts, take aim at American imperialism and its running dogs, and fire!²

-Staff Critic, *Chinese Theatre* (c. 1965)

Even before the revolutionary opera would come to dominate the Chinese dramatic arts during the Cultural Revolution, world revolution had established a frontline in the cultural and artistic sphere of the People's Republic of China. Much as they had in Yan'an in the 1940s and again during the Hundred Flowers and Anti-Rightist Campaigns of the late 1950s, by the early-to-mid 1960s Chinese Communist Party leaders looked upon culture and the arts as a key battleground in China's larger socialist revolution. Amidst their post-Great Leap Forward anxiety for the prospects of Chinese socialism and in the wake of the late 1962 Tenth Plenum's tilt left, the creative arts would be tasked with an expanded role within the Party's apparatus of mobilizing propaganda. With *domestic internationalism* in full swing, internationalist themes became one of several tropes defining the revolutionized, creative Chinese cultural realm.

Through the dramatic arts, the Party aimed to guide artists in shaping the narrative of world revolution and animating international events otherwise difficult for a domestic Chinese audience to perceive. In so doing, these plays highlighting ongoing events in Vietnam, the

¹ *People's Music* Editorial Department, "Chengshengqianjin chuang shidai de zuiqiang yin" [Advance Forward and Create the Most Powerful Music of the Age], *Renmin Yinyue* [*People's Music*], 1 (1966), 3.

² *Chinese Theatre* Staff Critic "Yong xiju wuqi henhen daji Meidi!" [Use the Weapon of the Dramatic Arts to Ferociously Attack U.S. Imperialism!], *Xijubao* [*Chinese Theatre*], 3 (1965), 25.

Congo, and even the American South not only made these struggles intelligible to ordinary Chinese people, but they also gave Chinese dramatic artists themselves the perception of playing a direct role in world revolution. By then adapting these creative pieces into a variety of traditional and popularly cherished Chinese dramatic forms, these plays effectively Sinicized world revolution, making it understandable to large swaths of a broad Chinese audience occupying various points along the social and educational spectrum. Further still, these stories would go on to be localized into folk cultural forms, facilitating their transmission to street corners and rural villages across the country, and democratizing their creation and performance to professional and amateur playwrights and dramatic artists alike. World revolution was indeed being performed across local China.

I begin this chapter by looking at the CCP's effort to render more revolutionary the Chinese cultural sphere between 1962 and 1965, focusing especially on the Party's desire to produce internationalist creative works. By appealing to the needs of the revolutionary struggle at home *and* abroad, the Party not only spurred Chinese artists to craft original works with internationalist themes, but also offered them an ostensibly direct role to play on the frontlines of world revolution. Further still, the Party urged PRC artists to fit these global stories into traditional Chinese cultural forms, and to ensure they would be sufficiently intelligible to a mass audience at home.

I will then delve into some of the many internationalist works produced by these artists, highlighting two stories creatively adapted from Vietnamese propaganda works (*Letters from the South*, and the story of Nguyen Van Troi), and two entirely original works treating events in the Congo (*War Drums on the Equator*) and the Vietnamese guerilla campaign (*Fury at Coconut Grove*). Summoning a host of overarching themes including race, postcolonial development,

modernization, and sovereignty, these plays accorded seamlessly with the narrative of events abroad the Party was itself articulating elsewhere. These works suggested to Chinese audiences the existence of an imagined fraternal community of global revolutionaries, enjoying a shared sense of time with history shifting in their direction, but unmistakably led by Chairman Mao and his PRC. Packaged in familiar Chinese artistic forms, these works made the world accessible to PRC audiences at varying levels of society, and effectively Sinicized world revolution.

Trickling down further still, as this chapter's final section describes, original internationalist works occasionally transcended the major Sinic dramatic forms, and were localized into more folk and mass artistic mediums including: slideshows, wooden puppet plays, comic books, and 'living newspaper' skits. These folk forms helped tales of world revolution reach beyond merely urban centers, and advance deep into the vast countryside. Largely forgotten by history, the creative Chinese tales of world revolution discussed in this chapter formed a key part of the CCP's constellation of internationalist propaganda, rousing a domestic audience to care deeply about events abroad by literally staging world revolution in local China.

Intentions from the Top: The Party, Chinese Artists, and Revolutionizing the Cultural Sphere

It was no secret that the Chinese Communist Party viewed arts and culture as a key pillar of China's socialist revolution. Following in the vein both of Mao's influential 1942 Yan'an talks beckoning arts and literature to serve politics and of the Hundred Flowers Campaign of the late-1950s with its conflicted attempt to draw artists deeper into the fold of the revolution, in the early-to-mid-1960s the Party again looked to the arts to reinvigorate the PRC's sputtering pursuit of socialism. This time, however, the order of the day was to encourage the Chinese creative community to offer original works more revolutionary in their content. The brief "thaw"

enjoyed by the Chinese arts in the immediate wake of the Great Leap Forward was over.³ Mao's resurgence, and the political agenda he carried with him, demanded nothing less than a deepened commitment to the revolution for the creative Chinese cultural realm.

As with the Party's push to have the wider world seep into all dimensions of everyday PRC life in the early-to-mid-1960s, this call for more revolutionary Chinese creative works included promoting internationalism. In a May 1962 *People's Daily* editorial, Vice Minister of Culture Zhou Yang reminded artists of the need to help people raise their consciousness about international events, and implored the cultural realm to maintain a spirit of internationalism.⁴ The Ministry of Culture followed this up in March 1963, encouraging artists to serve socialism by straying from traditional themes in their creative work.⁵ The following month Zhou Enlai delivered a report at the National Arts Working Conference in Beijing entitled "You Must Become a Revolutionary Artist," in which he urged Chinese artists to vigorously strengthen the revolution's "artistic and cultural frontline."⁶ Not to be outdone amidst his return to the fore, it was not long before Mao himself weighed in. After offering an initial lament in late-1963 that Chinese art still harbored feudalist and capitalist undertones, Mao criticized the cultural sphere

³ Walder, *China Under Mao*, 185-188.

⁴ Zhou Yang, "'Wei zuiguangda de renminqunzhong fuwu' (jielu) – Jinian Mao Zedong tongzhi 《Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhuishang de jianghua》 fabiao ershi zhounian" ['Serving the Broadest Masses' (excerpt) – Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of Comrade Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art*] in Wu Di ed., *Zhongguo dianying yanjiu ziliao* [*Documents on Chinese Film Research, 1949-1979*], (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe [Culture and Arts Press], 2006), vol. 2: 404.

⁵ "Zhongyang pizhuan Wenhua bu dangzhu guanyu tingyan "guixi" de qingshi baogao (1963 nian 3 yue 29 ri)" [The Central Committee Endorses the Ministry of Culture Party Branch's Report on Halting Performances of "Ghost Dramas (March, 29, 1963)] in Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting, Zhongyang dang'anguan bianyanbu eds., *Zhongguo Gongchandang xuanchuangongzuo wenxian xuanbian* [*Selected Documents of the Chinese Communist Party's Propaganda Work*], (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe [Study Press], 1997), vol. 4, [hereafter: ZGXCGZ4]: 278.

⁶ Zhonggong Shaanxisheng Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department], "Yao zuo yige geming de wenyi gongzuozhe—Zhou Enlai zongli baogao 1963 nian 4 yue 19 ri yu Huairentang [You Must Become a Revolutionary Artist—Premier Zhou Enlai's Report on April 19, 1963 at the Huairen Tang]," undated, SXPA, 123-3-917, 54.

again midway through 1964, arguing that it did not do enough to connect to the Chinese workers, peasants, and soldiers (*gong-nong-bing*) it ought to serve.⁷

Unsurprisingly, Mao's intervention added a dose of urgency to the revolutionization of the arts. As one Beijing Culture Bureau report highlighted, Mao's two statements combined with the Tenth Plenum to effectively initiate a 'culture revolution.'⁸ A *Red Flag* (*Hongqi*) editorial in the wake of Mao's second criticism insisted that plays, folk art, films, literature, music, dance, and the fine arts all needed to intensify their revolutionary content.⁹ At the local-level, the message was being received. A report by the Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department and later circulated nationwide by the Central Committee embraced deepening the revolutionary commitment of the arts as a means to repel the cultural influences of capitalists, revisionists and counterrevolutionaries.¹⁰ Accordingly, the Shaanxi Provincial Culture Bureau's plans for late-1963 spelled out a concerted effort to "fully use cultural weapons to wage struggle against society's harmful elements."¹¹ Indeed, by late 1965, the national Vice-Minister of Culture Xiao Wangdong was able to declare that revolutionary dramas had begun to occupy the stage nationwide, and "workers, peasants, and soldiers had now replaced emperors, generals, ministers,

⁷ "Guanyu wenxue yishu de pishi (1963 nian 12 yue 12 ri)" [Memo Regarding Arts and Literature (December 12, 1963)] in *ZGXCZ4*, 334.

⁸ Beijingshi Wenhua ju Dangzu [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture Party Section], "Guanyu jiaqiang xiandai jumu chuanguo de baogao [Report Regarding Strengthening the Writing of Modern Dramatic Works]," November 16, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00102, 2.

⁹ "Wenhua zhanxianshang de yige dageming" [A Great Revolution on the Cultural Frontline] in Wu Di ed., *Zhongguo dianying yanjiu ziliao* [Documents on Chinese Film Research, 1949-1979], vol. 2: 439.

¹⁰ Zhonggong Shaanxi Shengwei Xuanchuanbu [Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department], "Guanyu Shaanxi diqu sixiang zhanxianshang jieji douzheng xingshi he women de yijian de baogao [Report Regarding the Class Struggle Situation on the Ideological Frontline in Shaanxi Province and Our Views]," June 16, 1963, SXPA, 232-1-398, 2-13.

¹¹ Shaanxisheng Wenhua ju [Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu 1963 nian shangbannian wenhua gongzuo jiankuang he xiabannian gongzuo yaodian [Briefing Regarding Culture Work in the First Half of 1963 and Important Points for Work in the Second Half of the Year]," August 12, 1963, SXPA, 232-1-425, 89.

scholars and beautiful ladies” in their storylines.¹² Amongst the various revolutionary themes promoted in the creative arts was internationalism, and top-level representatives made clear to emphasize to artists the importance of incorporating this trope.

In his influential 1963 “You Must Become a Revolutionary Artist” report, Zhou Enlai had begun making the argument that Chinese revolutionary art served a purpose beyond the PRC’s borders. Defining the revolutionary enterprise as “participating in the domestic socialist revolution through to supporting revolution in Asia-Africa-Latin America,” Zhou impelled artists to blend ‘revolutionary realism’ with ‘revolutionary romanticism,’ pushing audiences to consider not merely the revolution’s present but also its future.¹³ It falls on artists, Zhou asserted, to help prepare the public to “look at socialism and think of eventual communism, to look at the victory of the Chinese revolution and think of world revolution.”¹⁴ To accomplish this, Zhou claimed artists themselves needed to perceive of their creative work as simultaneously serving both the Chinese revolution and world revolution more broadly.

Central Propaganda chief Lu Dingyi ran with Zhou’s point, asserting that Chinese artists must take the lead in the arts and culture work of the world revolutionary movement.¹⁵ Since revisionism is unable to understand the revolutionary struggle of Asia-Africa-Latin America, Lu reasoned, it is China – which now plays a decisive role on the world stage – that must take

¹² Zhonggong Wenhuaabu [Central Department of Culture], “Guanyu quanguo wenhuaju (ting) zhang huiyi jingshen de chuanda [Forwarding the Main Points of the National Conference of Culture Leaders],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-660, 5.

¹³ Zhonggong Shaanxisheng Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department], “Yao zuo yige geming de wenyi gongzuozhe—Zhou Enlai zongli baogao 1963 nian 4 yue 19 ri yu Huairentang [You Must Become a Revolutionary Artist—Premier Zhou Enlai’s Report on April 19, 1963 at the Huaren Tang],” undated, SXPA, 123-3-917, 36.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “Lu Dingyi tongzhi zai wenyi gongzuo huiyi shang de baogao (1963 nian 4 yue 3 ri) [Comrade Lu Dingyi’s Report at the Conference on Arts and Culture Work (April, 3, 1963)],” undated, HPA, SZ7-1-228, 4.

seriously its important global opportunity in the arts.¹⁶ Speaking at a conference dedicated to film production in late 1964, Zhou Yang called for more films encouraging revolution and anti-imperialism across Asia-Africa-Latin America.¹⁷ Like Lu, Zhou Yang felt that as the indisputable center of world revolution, the PRC's revolutionary art and culture should become the vanguard (*xianfengdui*) of socialist art, and thus needed to do more for both its domestic and its international audience.¹⁸

At a 1965 meeting of Central Propaganda leaders including both Lu and Zhou Yang, Lu spoke about the didactic role of PRC creative films for foreign revolutionaries, saying watching them was akin to “going to class.”¹⁹ In his own report at the conference, prominent propagandist Shi Ximin went a step further, suggesting that Chinese war films offer tremendous support for, and have a large effect on, revolution being waged across Asia-Africa-Latin America.²⁰ For CCP leaders, it was crucial to not only push Chinese artists to revolutionize the content of their work, but also to constantly remind them of the alleged global stakes to their craft.

Foreign hearts and minds notwithstanding, top leaders were equally elaborative as to how a revolutionized Chinese cultural sphere was to resonate with its domestic audience. In the fall of 1962, the Central Committee issued a directive to playwrights to strengthen their screenplays by deepening their revolutionary commitment and forging a closer connection with ordinary

¹⁶ Lu's exact words regarding revisionism and its conceptual disconnect from world revolution were: “Revisionism cannot conceive of black people, it is only concerned with avoiding nuclear bombs falling on its head.” (Ibid.)

¹⁷ “Zhou Yang tongzhi zai dianying shengchan huiyishang de jianghua (jilu) (1964 nian 11 yue 23 ri shangwu 10 shi yu Beijing fandan) [Comrade Zhou Yang's Speech at the Conference on Film Production (Record) (November 23, 1964, 10AM at the Beijing Hotel)],” undated, SXPA, 123-3-975, 4-8.

¹⁸ “Zhou Yang tongzhi zai quanguo wenhuaju (ting) zhang huiyishang de baogao—1965 nian 9 yue 15, 16 ri [Comrade Zhou Yang's Report at the National Conference of Culture Leaders—September 15 and 16, 1965],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-658, 6.

¹⁹ “Lu Dingyi tongzhi zai gushi pianchang changzhang dangwei shuji huiyishang de jianghua [Comrade Lu Dingyi's Speech at the Conference for Leaders of Film Production],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-661, 16.

²⁰ “Shi Ximin fubuzhang zai dianying zhipianchang changzhang shuju huiyishang de baogao [Vice-Minister Shi Ximin's Report at the Conference for Leaders of Film Production],” undated, *ibid.*, 33.

people.²¹ At a conference in 1964, Zhou Enlai called for revolutionizing and ‘mass-izing’ (*dazhonghua*) Chinese music and dance, and emphasized the need to study influences from the Asian-African-Latin American world.²² Instead of importing these cultural forms, however, Zhou envisioned blending these influences with preexisting traditional, Chinese artistic forms. As he had made clear in an earlier report on the topic in mid-1963, China’s best cultural contribution to the world revolutionary movement would come not from importing foreign stories, but in Sinicizing (*minzuhua*) foreign influences into Chinese cultural forms.²³ If Zhou extolled the virtues of making a global contribution, however, his insistence on maintaining Chinese cultural forms was also surely made with a domestic PRC audience in mind.

Indeed, Zhou was adamant that the creative arts must serve as an instrument for popular mobilization at home. As he spelled out in an extensive August 1965 presentation to the Ministry of Culture on advancing the film industry, “you, cultural and artistic workers, must mobilize the workers, peasants, and soldiers...educate the people, unite the people, inspire the people, these are the responsibilities of those working in arts and culture.”²⁴ Zhou’s words not only reminded Chinese artists of the most immediate audience they must arouse into action, but they also betrayed the Party’s primary goal in revolutionizing artistic content within the familiar context of Sinic cultural forms.

²¹ ZGXCZ, 269.

²² Wenhuaabu Dangzu [Central Department of Culture Party Section], “Guanyu diaocha zai Jing yinyue wudao yuanxiao he yinyue wudao biaoyan tuanti de baogao [Report Regarding Adjustments at Beijing Schools of Music and Dance and Music and Dance Troupes],” undated, BMA, 164-001-00414, 15, 17.

²³ Wenhuaabu wenxue yishu yanjiuyuan, *Zhou Enlai lun wenyi* [Zhou Enlai on Literature and Art], (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe [People’s Literature Press], 1979), 181.

²⁴ Zhonggong Shaanxi Shengwei Bangongting Jiyaoshi [Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee Secretariat Office of Important Affairs], “Zhou Enlai tongzhi 1965 nian 8 yue 11 ri zai wenhuaabu zhaokai de dianying chuanzuo ticai guihua huiyishang de baogao jilu [Record of Comrade Zhou Enlai’s Report on August 11, 1965 at the Department of Culture’s Conference on the Guidelines of Film Creation and Subject Matter],” October 25, 1965, SXPA, 232-2-655, 109.

In pursuit of its larger propaganda strategy of *domestic internationalism*, in the mid-1960s the CCP set out to revolutionize the creative arts by encouraging, amongst other themes, content broaching international events. As top leaders insisted to Chinese artists that their work inspired revolutionaries abroad, the Party effectively carved out an imagined but direct role for these artists to play in world revolution. The stakes of PRC culture work had been raised; Chinese artists had been called to the frontline of world revolution.

At the same time that these artists were being pushed toward producing modern, revolutionary art, traditional Chinese cultural forms were to be maintained. As the Party was keenly aware, if new and internationalized cultural works were ever going to resonate with a domestic Chinese audience reflecting varying levels of education and cultural literacy, the stability offered by traditional and folk cultural mediums was necessary; if artistic depictions of world revolution were going to be brought to local China, they needed to be packaged in intelligible and popular cultural mediums. While the Party laid the groundwork for these stories to be crafted, they also had to ensure that those on the artistic and cultural frontline knew of what they would write, and settle the logistics of making these works available to the Chinese masses.

Artists and culture workers were encouraged to ‘go down’ to the countryside, where they would obtain a more direct perspective on class struggle by “plunging into the thick of life” (*shenru shenghuo*).²⁵ Teams of culture workers, including brigades of travelling dramatic artists, would also be dispatched across the country to perform original productions already written.

These performances would accompany the various political campaigns underway including the

²⁵ See, for example, Beijing Renmin Yishu Juyuan [Beijing People’s Artistic Theatre], “Beijingshi zhuyao yishu ganbu shenru shenghuo de qingkuang [The Circumstances of Important Beijing Arts Cadres Plunging into the Thick of Life],” December 9, 1965 and Beijingshi Wenlian Dangzu [Beijing Municipal Federation of Cultural Circles Party Group], “Beijingshi wenlian zhuan ye zuojia shenru shenghuo qingkuang [The Circumstances of Beijing Federation of Cultural Circles Specialized Writers Plunging into the Thick of Life],” December 1965, BMA, 001-012-00729, 5, 16. This report by the Beijing Municipal Propaganda Department also documents artists and culture workers who, in addition to spending time in the Chinese countryside, also travelled to Vietnam to gain even further firsthand experience from which to write their internationalist works.

Four Clean-Ups, the Five-Antis, and the Socialist Education Movement. Accordingly, local culture bureaus increased their cultural and artistic events substantially, enlarging the number of theatre performances, film screenings, artistic-themed festivals, and other events.

As the small county of Zizhou in northern Shaanxi remarked in a 1965 report on culture work, propaganda plays premised on the domestic and international struggle helped mobilize the largely rural population there to step up agricultural production amidst the lingering effects of the Great Leap Forward.²⁶ In Hancheng County, outside Xi'an, officials drew upon plays small and large about the anti-American struggle in Vietnam to encourage production and improve popular political consciousness.²⁷ Hancheng's experience was by no means unique in the PRC during the mid-1960s, as world revolution took to the Chinese stage and captivated a nation.

World Revolution in the Creative PRC

By 1964, Chinese creative artists began to answer the Party's call for internationalist works. As domestic audiences flocked to view the global struggle played out on the Chinese stage, these works helped both performer and viewer feel part of a broad community of world revolutionaries all surging forward at once to greet history together. Time was on their side, and history was now going to right the wrongs wrought by Western colonialism and its imperialist aftershocks. But these plays also worked to implicitly, often through the creative use of imagery, make clear one important caveat about this community: China was its leading light. Owing to Mao and the developmental path his PRC had blazed for non-white, postcolonial peoples

²⁶ Zizhoushan Wenjiao Weishengju [Zizhou County Bureau of Culture, Education and Public Health], "Guanyu 1965 nian wenhua gongzuo zongjie baogao [Summary Report Regarding 1965 Culture Work]," January 12, 1966, SXPA, 232-2-698, 50-52.

²⁷ Hanchengxian Wenjiao Weishengju [Hancheng County Bureau of Culture, Education and Public Health], "Guanyu 1965 nian wenhua gongzuo zongjie baogao [Summary Report Regarding 1965 Culture Work]," February 14, 1966, *ibid.*, 84.

everywhere, these stories suggested, China was a beacon for Vietnamese guerillas, Congolese anti-imperialists, and even African-Americans persecuted in their own country. These tales convinced the Chinese actor and audience member alike that by staging and viewing these performances, they were contributing a distinct act of support to these world revolutionary causes. They had a direct role to play in the global struggle – the stage a battlefield, the lines weapons, the performance a military operation. Fitted into familiar Sinic dramatic forms, these plays were given every chance to resonate with spectators all across the PRC, and they did precisely that. This section examines four internationalist Chinese works (*Letters from the South*, the Nguyen Van Troi story, *War Drums on the Equator*, and *Fury at Coconut Grove*) performed widely in the mid-1960s, repackaged and rewritten a number of different ways, and remarkably effective in projecting world revolution abroad into everyday life in the PRC.

Letters from the South

When Chinese creative artists first began to craft their own original works emphasizing internationalist themes by mid-1964, it was obvious where to look for inspiration. The U.S. presence in Vietnam was mounting and the struggle there was already a daily propaganda trope in everyday Chinese life. Further still, the government in Hanoi was producing its own mobilizing propaganda and translated these works into various languages corresponding to its closest and most sympathetic foreign audiences. The most famous piece in Hanoi's propaganda arsenal was *Letters from the South*, a two-volume collection of letters allegedly written by National Liberation Front fighters waging guerilla war in South Vietnam and sent back to their loved ones in the North. These letters not only captivated its Chinese readership, but went on to inspire two prominent theatrical adaptations in the PRC.

Originally published in mid-1963 in Vietnamese, the Chinese translations of the two volumes of *Letters from the South* were read to a warm reception following their arrival in the PRC in January and June 1964, respectively. In January 1965, a separate “rural edition” (*nongcunban*) was assembled by a Chinese publisher, which offered selections from the two volumes, short explanations of some terminology, and phonic guides for difficult Chinese characters. The letters offered a human dimension to the world revolutionary struggle against imperialism, often depicting NLF fighters separated from their families and facing the threat of being hunted in the U.S.-backed South. Notably, the letters represented guerilla fighters of both genders and representing multiple levels of society, from intellectuals to lifelong soldiers. In praise of the collections, the famous Chinese poet Zang Kejia wrote several poems capturing his response to the letters, among them asking: “Can you hear that? Far away there are many that applaud your victory.”²⁸ The acclaimed writer Han Beiping was so taken with the letters that he lauded the collection for helping Chinese people to imagine the fight against U.S. imperialism, and even took a trip to Hanoi, meeting personally with one of the letter writers.²⁹ It was not long before Chinese playwrights caught wind of *Letters* and set to work on their own adaptations of the portraits they captured.

As early as the fall of 1964, an original Chinese ‘dialogue drama’ (*huaju*) entitled *Letters from the South* was ready for performance.³⁰ Written by several writers of the Culture Work Group of the People’s Liberation Army’s Political Department, the play depicts a South Vietnamese community in the throes of the U.S.-led ‘Strategic Hamlet Program,’ and the heroic

²⁸ Zang Kejia, “Nanyue yingxiong zan——du 《*Nanfang laixin*》” [In Praise of the Heroes of South Vietnam —— Reading *Letters from the South*], *Renmin Wenxue* [People’s Literature], (1964, no. 6), 20-21.

²⁹ Han Beiping, “《*Nanfang laixin*》 de shouxinren” [Recipients of *Letters from the South*] *Renmin Wenxue* [People’s Literature], (1964, no. 9), 18.

³⁰ ‘Dialogue drama’ (*huaju*) was a Chinese dramatic form originally derived from western theatre traditions, but performed in China since the late Qing dynasty and expanded greatly in Shanghai during the 1920s. ‘Dialogue dramas’ unsurprisingly emphasize speech, either through monologues or dialogue between characters.

efforts of guerilla fighters to undermine the schemes of the U.S.-Ngo Dinh Diem tandem. Along the way, the play summons a number of themes clearly intentioned to share an implicit meaning for, and resonance with, a domestic Chinese audience. In addition to lauding the accomplishments of the South Vietnamese People's Revolutionary Party in a clear endorsement of the CCP's own stewardship of the PRC, the story also highlights the importance of popular protest and mass demonstration in both mobilizing one's fellow countrymen as well as drawing international attention to the struggle. Through a central scene involving a mass demonstration following the brutal murder of a village member, the play argues that such protests "[merge] together the military struggle and the political struggle...to give us all a better chance to grasp victory in this fight."³¹ The story goes on to lament the despicable actions of traitorous Vietnamese (*maiguozei*) 'selling out' their homeland by colluding with U.S. advisors there. Amidst the CCP's mounting discourse about the threats of counterrevolutionaries, the restoration of capitalism, and Soviet-style revisionism, the prevalence of treason in the script is conspicuous. Finally, the play makes reference to the PRC both explicitly, as their "scared territory" of Taiwan is brazenly also occupied by the U.S, and implicitly as the "glimmer of hope [that] will rise from the east" to support the reunification of the Vietnamese homeland.³² When the play concludes with the death of an American military advisor, the Vietnamese characters invoke the "peace-loving peoples of the world," making reference to an imagined global community of anti-American revolutionaries of which the Chinese audience is already a part.³³

In a subsequent discussion about the crafting of the play, two of its authors (Fu Duo and Ma Rong) said the first collection of letters pushed them to bring the Vietnamese struggle to the

³¹ Sha Se, Fu Duo, Ma Rong, and Li Qihuang, *Nanfang laixin* [Letters from the South], Beijing: Zhongguo Xiju Chubanshe [Chinese Theatre Press], (1965), 31-32.

³² *Ibid.*, 78.

³³ *Ibid.*, 80.

Chinese stage. While in the midst of writing their script, a combination of the second volume's emergence and the Tonkin Gulf incident sped up their process, and within a month the play was ready for rehearsal.³⁴ Fu and Ma were not alone. In Shanghai, the Propaganda Department of the Central Shanghai Municipal Party Committee was busy offering "contextual education" (*xingshi jiaoyu*) to dramatists at the Shanghai People's Artistic Theatre who were themselves planning their own original, 'dialogue drama' adaptation of *Letters from the South*. Through listening to radio reports, collectively reading newspaper articles, studying Mao's works, and participating in mass demonstrations, actors in the troupe were deeply immersed in the Vietnamese struggle and in the wider global revolution more broadly. A Propaganda Department report on their training highlighted several positive results, including: an improved consciousness and urgency about staying fluent with current international events, a heightened sense of the correctness and grandness of the CCP's policies, and a strengthened revolutionary enthusiasm which results in higher quality productions and better creative work produced by the masses.³⁵ On the last point, the report makes clear, revolutionary enthusiasm skyrocketed as the cast rehearsed their play. Increasingly viewing their work as playing a direct role in world revolution, the actors saw their production as a kind of military offensive directed against the U.S. In their words, the report goes on, "the stage, the rehearsal stage, are the battlefield; each line of script is a bullet fired at the American bandits; each performance of the play is a combat operation."³⁶ Moreover, the cast saw it as their duty to use the play to "attract more people to

³⁴ Fu Duo and Ma Rong, "Zhiyuan Yuenan xiongdi de kangMei douzheng – huaju 《*Nanfang laixin*》 chuangzuo xinde" [Support Our Vietnamese Brothers in Their Struggle Against the U.S. – Lessons from Writing *Letters from the South*], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 3), 26.

³⁵ Zhonggong Shanghai Renmin Yishu Juyuan Huaju Yituan Zhibu Weiyuanhui [Shanghai People's Artistic Theatre Number One Dialogue Drama Party Branch Committee], "Genju yishu danwei tedian, jinxing shishi xuexi [Engaging in Current Affairs Study According to the Special Characteristics of Artistic Work Units]," undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 96-98.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

our side, thereby isolating the U.S. imperialists to the fullest extent!”³⁷ From their rehearsal stage in Shanghai, and with city propaganda officials watching closely, the cast was prepared to make its contribution to the global struggle.

Like the PLA troupe’s play, the resulting Shanghai People’s Artistic Theatre ‘dialogue drama’ adaptation of *Letters from the South* was also a six-act piece premised upon one South Vietnamese village’s struggle amidst the ‘Strategic Hamlet Program.’ While its storyline is wholly distinct from the PLA group’s script, the Shanghai version too offered Chinese viewers a number of mobilizing themes designed to stir them into political participation. The story profiles a family headed by its matriarch, Auntie Feng, who also doubles as the Village Party Secretary, highlighting the revolution’s progressive position on gender while championing the Party’s leadership. The family aids and abets roving guerilla forces, and they combine to sabotage the ‘strategic hamlets’ and disrupt U.S.-led ‘mopping up’ military campaigns. Throughout, the story romanticizes guerilla warfare, making constant reference to American bombs being unable to destroy the “bamboo point spirit” (*zhujian jingshen*) of the heroic guerillas.³⁸ Expectantly, the PRC makes an explicit and proud appearance in the text, when a captured guerilla fighter addresses his American captor and the futility of the U.S. nuclear advantage: “Paper tiger! The victory of the Chinese revolution has proven this, and we Vietnamese are now in the midst of proving it. No weapon can frighten the awakened peoples. Your last days have arrived!”³⁹ Summoning one of Mao’s favorite phrases, the language of ‘paper tigers’ and the tactful positioning of China’s leadership at the helm of world revolution was no accident.⁴⁰ Not unlike

³⁷ Ibid., 97.

³⁸ Shanghai Renmin Yishu Juyuan Huaju Yituan [The First Dialogue Drama Troupe of the Shanghai People’s Arts Theatre], *Nanfang laixin* [*Letters from the South*], Shanghai: Shanghai Wenhua Chubanshe [Shanghai Culture Press], (1965), 37.

³⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁴⁰ Although Mao was not the first to coin the term ‘paper tiger’ (*zhilaohu*) it was a favorite of his, and made its way into several of his most widely read writings. See, for example, “U.S. Imperialism is a Paper Tiger” (July 14, 1956)

the PLA version, the Shanghai script concludes by suggesting global camaraderie between all who share “the common enemy of the entire world’s people, American imperialism.”⁴¹

In performance, both the PLA and the Shanghai versions of *Letters from the South* resonated with Chinese audiences in important ways for political mobilization. Though premised on the Vietnamese struggle, the plays advance an imagined and exaggerated sense of global community existing between world revolutionaries. Within this community, both plays too subtly assert Chinese leadership of this group, especially privileging the precedent of China’s socialist revolution as a roadmap for postcolonial development and modernization. Finally, this global community is presented with a sense that the international tide is turning in favor of the broad, revolutionary masses of the Asian-African-Latin American world – time is on its side. As performances began in late 1964, the accolades began rolling in.

The PLA version of the play was unveiled at the 1964 National Day celebrations in Beijing, with none other than North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong in attendance. Pham was reportedly so moved by the performance he was said to be shaking, and was even brought to tears. On the strength of Pham’s reaction, Zhou Enlai and other top leaders were keen to arrange their own viewing, and a private production took place later that October for an audience that included: Zhou, Zhu De, Dong Biwu, Peng Zhen, Li Xiannian, and Bo Yibo. The group was delighted by the play and took the stage to shake hands with the cast upon its completion.⁴² Top-level approval aside, the play was also garnering considerable popular support. One review

and “All Reactionaries are Paper Tigers” (November 18, 1957), in Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume 5*, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977).

⁴¹ Shanghai Renmin Yishu Juyuan Huaju Yituan [The First Dialogue Drama Troupe of the Shanghai People’s Arts Theatre], *Nanfang laixin* [*Letters from the South*], 89.

⁴² “Mao Zhuxi tong dang he guojia qita lingdaoren guankan baleiwuju 《Hongse niangziju》 geju 《Jiangjie》 - Zhou Zongli deng liangdaoren guankan huaju 《Nanfang laixin》 ” [Chairman Mao and Other State and Party Leaders View the Ballet 《The Red Detachment of Women》 and the Opera 《Sister Jiang》 - Premier Zhou and Other Leaders View the Dialogue Drama 《Letters from the South》], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1964, no. 10), 1.

defined the work as “a crystallization of the South Vietnamese peoples’ blood and the Chinese peoples’ sweat.”⁴³ The renowned musician An Bo placed the play in the context of popular Chinese protest against U.S. actions in Vietnam, arguing that works like this are not only “encouraging and educational” for the Chinese people but also retain “enormous significance” for the international struggle.⁴⁴ Moved particularly by the female protagonist leading the story, An saw her voice as the voice of all the revolutionary people of the world, and wondered “how could they not but resonate deeply with the audience”?⁴⁵ The play also received glowing reviews from Vietnamese students living in the PRC, whose endorsement effectively served as corroboration for the validity of the play’s content and its supporting role in the struggle.⁴⁶ Productions of the Shanghai version were equally well received, and the play was even used by one Shanghai factory as part of its ‘current events education’ (*shishi jiaoyu*) training for its workers.⁴⁷

In the wake of the initial, late-1964 performances of the two ‘dialogue drama’ versions of *Letters*, a host of local-level drama troupes across the country began staging various dramatic adaptations of the two stories. Major cities including Kunming, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Tianjin hosted versions of *Letters* in forms including Beijing (*jingju*), Pingju (*pingju*) and Yue (*yueju*)

⁴³ “Gedi fenfendi shangyan 《*Nanfang laixin*》” [Places All Around the Country are Staging 《*Letters from the South*》], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1964, supplementary issue no. 1), 58.

⁴⁴ “Yuenan nanfang renmin yingyong douzheng de zange – pingjia huaju 《*Nanfang laixin*》” [Song of Praise for the Heroic Struggle of the People of Southern Vietnam – A Review of 《*Letters from the South*》], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1964, no. 9), 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁶ See, for example, “Shengli bijiang shuyu women – huaju 《*Nanfang laixin*》 guanhou gan” [Victory Will Inevitably Belong to Us – Reflections Upon Viewing *Letters from the South*], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1964, supplementary issue no. 1), 40, and *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 4), 6.

⁴⁷ Zhonggong Shanghai Dianlanchang Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Electric Cable Factory Propaganda Department], “Yunyong duozhong duoyang xuanchuan fangshi xiang zhigong jinxing shishi jiaoyu [Use All Kinds of Propaganda Forms to Engage Workers in Current Affairs Education],” undated, SMA, A22-2-1287, 264.

opera.⁴⁸ By the spring of 1965, local performances had spread further across the PRC, with dramatic forms expanding to include ‘dance dramas’ (*gewuju*) and ‘three-and-a-half sentence’ plays (*sanjubanju*) featuring rapid-fire dialogue.⁴⁹ Straying further from the PLA and Shanghai scripts, other works bearing derivative titles began popping up with regularity. That May there emerged a Pingju opera entitled *Flames of the South* (*Nanfang liehuo*).⁵⁰ *Flames* gained sizable notoriety and was performed alongside both versions of *Letters* at the 1965 Workers’ Day festivities in cities across the PRC. A comic book (*lianhuanhua*), *Fury from the South* (*Nanfang nuhuo*), and two wooden puppet plays (*mu’ou*), *Young Heroes of the South* (*Nanfang xiaoyingxiong*) and *Youth of the South* (*Nanfang shaonian*), effectively courted a younger audience and broadened the myriad traditional and folk Chinese cultural forms used to deliver these internationalist narratives. Riding the wave of the Chinese adaptations of *Letters from the South*, the PRC was taken with narratives of the Vietnamese struggle. These stories brought their Chinese audiences right into the arena of world revolution, and proved highly effective in helping them forge a personal and emotional connection to otherwise foreign events. Unsurprisingly, therefore, *Letters* was not the only Vietnamese original work reimagined by PRC artists and subsequently captivating to a Chinese audience.

The Story of Nguyen Van Troi

⁴⁸ See “Gedi fenfendi shangyan 《Nanfang laixin》” [Places All Around the Country are Staging 《Letters from the South》], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1964, supplementary issue no. 1), 58. Beijing opera (*jingju*) is a traditional style of drama originating in the Qing dynasty, combining music, dance and acrobatics. Pingju opera, emerging from China’s northeast, began in the late Qing dynasty and rose to prominence in the 1920s. Yue opera is a product of Zhejiang province, and also first emerged in the late Qing.

⁴⁹ See “Gedi fenfen shangyan 《Nanfang laixin》 zhiyuan Yuenan kangMei jiuguo douzheng” [Places All Around the Country are Staging *Letters from the South* and Supporting Vietnam’s Struggle to Resist the U.S. and Save Its Country], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 3), 25, and “Quanguo xijujie xianqile zhiyuan Yuenan kangMei aiguo douzheng xuanchuan rechao” [The Country’s Theatrical Sphere Has Sparked a Massive Wave of Propaganda in Support of Vietnam’s Patriotic Struggle Against the U.S.], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 4), 3.

⁵⁰ Shanghai Renmin Yishu Juyuan [The Shanghai People’s Arts Theatre], *Nanfang liehuo* [*Flames of the South*], Hunan: Hunan sheng xiqu yanjiushi [Hunan Provincial Dramatic Research Center], (1965).

Like the original Vietnamese version of *Letters*, the true story of the martyr Nguyen Van Troi was a pillar of Hanoi's propaganda efforts. A Viet Cong guerilla fighter, in May 1963 Nguyen unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and eventual ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. during their visit to South Vietnam. Following his capture and a failed attempt by Venezuelan communists to free him through a prisoner exchange, Nguyen was executed in October 1964. Almost immediately Nguyen was glorified as a martyr by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese government. By 1965, Nguyen's widow produced a book profiling his life, entitled *Live a Life Like His (Xiang ta nayang shenghuo)*. The first Chinese translation of the book was published in Beijing in July of that year, and did not take long to resonate with its PRC readership. Reviews generalized Nguyen's attributes to resonate with Chinese readers, lauding his "loyalty" and "ardent love" for his homeland and its people, as well as his "unparalleled hatred" for the enemy.⁵¹ The Shandong poet Guo Kuo wrote that looking at a picture of him upon his moment of execution was enough to make "the peoples of five continents firmly believe."⁵² In Shanghai, propaganda officials in the Municipal Finance and Trade Department used Nguyen's story as part of their 'war preparation' propaganda (*beizhan xuanchuan*) for their workers.⁵³ Though, by 1965, the PRC already had a wealth of its own revolutionary heroes including Lei Feng and Wang Jie, Nguyen Van Troi offered them a recent martyr of the *global* revolutionary struggle.

⁵¹ "Yao xiang Ruan Wenzhui lieshi nayang shenghuo he zhandou – du 《Xiang ta nayang shenghuo》" [Live a Life and Struggle Like the Martyr Ruan Wenzhui – Reading *Live a Life Like His*], *Shijie Zhishi* [World Affairs] (1965, no. 20), 26.

⁵² "Leidian song – ti Ruan Wenzhui lieshi jiu yishi de zhaopian" [Song of Thunder and Lightning – On the Photograph of Ruan Wenzhui Entry into Martyrdom], *Shandong Wenxue* [Shandong Literature], (1965, no. 9), 49.

⁵³ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Caimao Zhengzhibu Jiaochu [Shanghai Finance and Trade Political Department Propaganda and Education Office], "Caimao bumen jinxing beizhan xuanchuan de qingkuang [The Circumstances of Engaging in War Preparation Propaganda in the Finance and Trade Department]," September 6, 1965, SMA, A65-2-331, 3, 7.

Accordingly, PRC creative artists were quick to adapt Nguyen's story into various Chinese cultural forms. A Pingju opera bearing the Chinese version of Nguyen's name, Ruan Wenzhui, appeared in late 1965. By the end of the calendar year it had been performed 69 straight times in Beijing, every night to a sold out crowd.⁵⁴ The troupe performing the play claimed they received requests from 20 provinces, 90 cities, and 95 counties across the country for copies of the script so they too could stage productions. At a speech on culture work in Beijing, a representative of the Beijing People's Artistic Theatre referenced the play as one of several internationalist works that exemplify how his troupe has learned how to "better mobilize the masses through their creative innovation."⁵⁵ A 'dialogue drama' based on his widow's memoir was also written and performed to critical acclaim beginning in late 1965. As with many internationalist revolutionary dramas, a comic book version was produced to draw in a broader and younger Chinese audience. Entitled *Nguyen Van Troi, Vietnamese Hero*, the comic appeared in September 1965, and was part of a four-piece series on the Vietnamese anti-American struggle, which also included the titles *The Six Sisters of the Battlefield*, *Clever Attack on the Convoy*, and *The Heroine Xie Shijiao*.⁵⁶ *Nguyen Van Troi, Vietnamese Hero* follows his life story, highlighting along the way the regrettable treason of some of Nguyen's compatriots and the importance of the global network of revolutionary communities – best exemplified in the heroic

⁵⁴ "Shoudu xijujie qingzhu Yuenan nanfang minzu jiefang zhanxian chengli wuzhounian" [Beijing's Theatre Community Celebrates the 5th Anniversary of the Creation of Southern Vietnam's National Liberation Front], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre] (1965, no. 12), 22.

⁵⁵ "Zuzhi geming xiandaixi chuanguo de diandi jingyan – Cao Yu daibiao de fayan [A Snippet of the Experience of Organizing the Creation of Revolutionary Modern Theatre—Speech by a Representative of Cao Yu]," undated, BMA, 164-001-00445, 87-88.

⁵⁶ The comic book *The Heroine Xie Shijiao*, published in 1966, is the story of a female Vietnamese guerilla fighter who, on the strength of her battlefield accomplishments, was reportedly invited to the PRC and met with Mao. The comic also contains a shorter, separate story entitled *The Heroine Ruan Shiwu*, a guerilla insurgent who changes her name to "liberation army" (*jiefangjun*) as a sign of her devotion – a point likely not lost on a Chinese readership, given its linguistic proximity to the People's Liberation Army, the national army of the PRC (*Nüyingxiang Xie Shijiao* [*The Heroine Xie Shijiao*], (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe [The People's Fine Art Press], 1966), 26).

efforts of Venezuelan guerilla fighters to free him from captivity. The comic concludes with an editor's note imploring Chinese readers to action,

We hope that this comic will lead its readers to better study Nguyen, study how he treated people, study his endless loyalty to the enterprise of proletarian revolution, study his hatred for the enemy, study his heroic and indomitably tough character, study his brave spirit and revolutionary mettle in the face of any arduous difficulties. We hope this book will imbue readers with a hatred for US imperialism and its running dogs, and a reverence for heroes, and will cause them to contribute everything they have in support for the Vietnamese peoples' immense struggle to save their country against US imperialism, for protecting the socialist enterprise of the homeland, for supporting the revolutionary struggle of the world's people!⁵⁷

Not only does the passage de-link Nguyen's attributes from their Vietnamese context to allow him to serve as a transnational hero to global revolutionaries, but it also invites its Chinese readership to "contribute everything they have" to a struggle being waged abroad. As the CCP and Chinese artists carrying out their plan of *domestic internationalism* well knew, 'everything they have' was going to be 'contributed' within the PRC's geographic confines and with tangible benefits to the Party's goals of popular political mobilization.

War Drums on the Equator

If Chinese artists fashioned successful, original creative adaptations out of preexisting, foreign stories, as *Letters* and *Live a Life Like His* demonstrate, they were also keen to produce their own, purely innovative tales of world revolution to satisfy the Party's wishes. Though events in Vietnam served as fodder for the largest number of these original stories, Mao's November 1964 statement in support of leftist rebels in the Congo paved the way for the 'dialogue drama' *War Drums on the Equator*. Like the first Chinese adaptation of *Letters from the South*, *War Drums* was produced by several playwrights belonging to the Culture Work Group of the Political Department of the PLA (specifically, the Navy). First appearing in 1965,

⁵⁷ *Yuenan yingxiong Ruan Wenzhui [Nguyen Van Troi, Vietnamese Hero]*, (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe [People's Fine Arts Press], 1965), Editor's Note.

the writers traced the origins of the script to their participation in the November 1964 Shanghai protests against U.S. actions in the Congo.⁵⁸ Acknowledging support and encouragement from the Party Committee of the Navy and the leadership of its Political Department, the playwrights claimed their work was guided by Mao's statement on the Congo, the valiant struggle being waged by the Congolese people, and the "surging revolutionary struggle that defines the current age" and which serves as a major theme to the play.⁵⁹

War Drums profiles an extended Congolese family from the immediate days after the Congo's independence in July 1960 through the beginnings of the leftist guerilla campaign in 1964. The story opens with American advisors literally moving into residences being vacated by the departing Belgians in the initial days of Congolese independence. There under a United Nations (UN) mandate, Gilbert, the chief American representative, says all the rights things, professing his hatred for colonialism. As the play proceeds through early 1961, it is clear American racism has been brought to the Congo, as the U.S. characters treat their black staff as slaves, refer to them as "niggers," and literally intoxicate them with alcohol. Striving to subdue the Congolese population, the American and Belgian characters squabble over how they will divide the country's natural resources – coal, primarily – they are fixing to exploit. Though the Congolese family at the heart of the play suffers fracture, with some members working for the U.S. and UN and others standing in fierce opposition, by the story's culmination in 1964 they reunite in a commitment to wage guerilla war against the foreign enemy who has exposed itself as a racist, exploitative oppressor. As Gilbert is killed and the guerilla campaign begins in

⁵⁸ “《Chidao zhangu》 de dansheng” [The Creation of *War Drums on the Equator*], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 4), 19.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

earnest, the play closes with a reminder that “the peoples of the world support the Congolese (Leopoldville),” before a narrator’s voice implores the “Congolese brothers” to “fight on.”⁶⁰

War Drums puts forth a number of themes the CCP sought to advance about the Congolese story and which were likely to resonate with a domestic Chinese audience in 1965. Race forms a major component of the story, and appears deeply intertwined with American and Western designs for inhibiting postcolonial development and modernization in the non-white world. A clear line is drawn linking past slavery with recent colonization through to the ongoing Civil Rights Movement raging back in the U.S. The story paints a stark dichotomy, creating factions along white and non-white lines: the U.S., UN and Belgian colonialists pitted against the Congolese people, the Asian-African-Latin American world supporting them (including, of course, China), and the character of Warren – an African-American officer stationed in the Congo whose disillusionment pushes him to join the guerilla forces. Gilbert, his commanding officer, attempts to use Warren’s “extremely useful” blackness to safeguard the American façade of liberal democracy while actually deploying a policy of “let niggers kill niggers.”⁶¹ Gradually, Warren realizes that the American racism he experienced at home when his father was hanged by the Klu Klux Klan, extends fluidly through U.S. foreign policy. Upon joining the Congolese guerillas, he is welcomed as “an American negro brother,” and the blending of revolution and race far trumps his American citizenship.⁶² As, in the 1960s, the PRC sought to challenge U.S. and Soviet foreign relations in the decolonized world by presenting itself as the true, non-white, revolutionary exemplar of developmental modernization, *War Drums* accompanied this reading of race perfectly.

⁶⁰ Li Huang, Chang Feng-yi, Lin Yin-wu, and Chu Tsu-yi, *War Drums on the Equator*, Translated by Gladys Yang, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), 84.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 47.

War Drums also aims to highlight the excruciating experience of the developing world's suffering at the hands of the Western powers. The American representatives constantly peddle their "Peace Whiskey" to the Congolese characters, and even convince one depressed Congolese intellectual to sell the alcohol for them with an advertisement around his neck. The metaphor for a seemingly intoxicating U.S. ideology of peace is clear, but the idea of the West 'drugging' its (neo-) colonial victims was also likely to resonate with a Chinese audience raised on nationalist narratives of the Opium War and the British use of narcotics to subjugate an innocent Qing China. The play further emphasizes how the West's exploitation of the developing world tears families apart and encourages well-intentioned locals to betray their homeland and their people. Though the Congolese family at the heart of the story draws upon its tight familial bond to survive the temporary treachery of some of its members, it is not before some are held captive, others tortured, and one member is killed. The family and the Congolese cast at large offer the play's Chinese audience a clear message: family and nation, if not weakened by betrayal and enemy collusion, can and will defeat their oppressor; a powerful message in light of the CCP's insistence that the PRC itself continued to be rife with traitorous class enemies.

A final critical set of themes to *War Drums* is found in the play's suggestion of a broad and surging worldwide revolutionary movement, of which the Congo is only one such venue. While the specifics of the Congo's story are important to the play, it is also very much presented as a stand-in for revolutionary struggles in the Asian-African-Latin American world more broadly. With both the Congo and Africa existing largely unfamiliar to a Chinese audience, the story emphasizes the exoticness of its setting, highlighting African drums, Swahili war chants, and drawing attention to the conspicuously muscular, black bodies of the male cast. Here, both Africa as a place and Africans as people appear in essentialized form with the goal of

emphasizing the global spread of revolutionary struggle and romanticizing guerilla warfare as their mode of choice. Indeed, the protracted guerilla struggle in the story is depicted through the Congolese characters appearing half-dressed, emerging from the jungle with traditional weapons including bows and arrows. The script's emphasis on "strik[ing] roots in the mountains and jungles [to] carry on a protracted war of attrition," presents a link for Chinese spectators between the jungles of Africa and Mao's 'theory of people's war' emphasizing precisely this kind of tactical strategy. If *War Drums* suggests a worldwide community of revolutionaries in the Congo and beyond, it was sure to subtly insinuate China's position at the forefront of this group. In a number of unmistakable references deploying familiar imagery, the Congolese characters discuss the "sun [that] has already risen in the east" letting "the people of Africa know how to greet the future," and they prophesize a "free and independent Congo will certainly appear like a red sun on the equator."⁶³ The PRC, and Mao's instrumental leadership, loom over the story of Congo's revolution, presenting not only a pathway to victory over imperialist aggression, but also a roadmap to a future promising sovereignty, development, and modernization.

If familiar Maoist imagery only implicitly referenced the Chairman's influence over Congolese guerillas in *War Drums* it was not for a lack of nationalist enthusiasm on the part of the playwrights, themselves eager to propagandize the PRC's stewardship of world revolution. As the writers later described, they crafted their story by viewing the Congo's ongoing struggle through the lens of China's own experience of semi-colonialism and revolutionary path to liberation. Further still, they identified 'Mao Zedong Thought' as the "guiding principle" (*zhizhen*) to the play's creation, and credited Mao's leadership with granting them "the ability to

⁶³ Ibid., 73, 84.

keep the homeland in heart, but place their eyes on the world.”⁶⁴ Indeed, it took orders from the highest levels of the CCP to reel back the play’s Sinocentric hue of the PRC as the beacon for global revolutionaries.

In early 1965, before staging the play for public audiences, a special performance was held for top leaders including Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yi, Peng Zhen, Guo Moruo, and Deng Yingchao. Though *War Drums* apparently received enthusiastic applause from the dignitaries in attendance, Zhou Enlai in particular had some concerns.⁶⁵ Following his viewing, Zhou contacted Zhou Weizhi, a senior official at the Ministry of Culture with whom he had been working closely on ensuring the production of artistic works in line with the CCP’s goals. Zhou asked Zhou Weizhi about a particular scene in *War Drums* in which “the black African revolutionaries” are reading *The Collected Works of Mao Zedong* – “Are they reading it before their fight,” Zhou asked, “or amidst their fight.”⁶⁶ For Zhou Weizhi, Zhou’s meaning was clear: in order to avoid portraying the PRC as “exporting revolution” or guilty of “great power chauvinism,” it was imperative to portray the Congolese revolutionaries as drawing inspiration from Mao’s lessons *after* commencing their struggle. Zhou’s concerns were picked up by Lu Dingyi, Minister of Culture and Head of the Central Propaganda Department, who praised both *Letters of the South* and *War Drums on the Equator*, but said PRC playwrights must be “cautious” in their work since in the past the USSR had made films about the China’s own revolution that left Chinese audiences feeling hurt.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ “《Chidao zhangu》 de dansheng” [The Creation of *War Drums on the Equator*], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 4), 19.

⁶⁵ See *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁶ “Zhou Weizhi huiyi Zhou Enlai” [Zhou Weizhi Remembers Zhou Enlai], *Yan Huang chunqiu* [Annals of the Yellow Emperor], (2011, no. 5), 54.

⁶⁷ “Lu Dingyi tongzhi zai gushi pianchang changzhang dangwei shuji huiyishang de jianghua [Comrade Lu Dingyi’s Speech at the Conference for Leaders of Film Production],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-661, 17.

Chen Yi too encouraged caution on this front. Inviting the playwrights to his home in March 1965 following his viewing of the play, Chen lauded the production but urged them to remove the reprint of Mao's official statement on the Congo inserted as an unstated preface to the published script. Like Zhou Enlai, Chen did not want "African reactionaries" to accuse the PRC of "infiltrating" their country, and felt "you don't want to blow your own horn, but rather have others speak highly of you themselves."⁶⁸ Interestingly, Chen noted that the play was guilty of exaggerating the extent of the Congolese underground struggle and guerilla war, but felt this was not a problem since it "raises the reality and allows that to serve as a guide."⁶⁹ Chen went on to tacitly endorse the play's romantic essentialization of Third World revolution, saying indeed many places in Africa continued to be "ignorant and uncivilized" (*mengmei zhuangtai*) tribal societies where "blind superstition" (*mixin*) pervaded and concepts of nation and class were not well understood.⁷⁰ For Chen, therefore, inaccuracies or generalizations in the script's content – that is, the treatment of the Congo and Africa more broadly – were subordinate to concerns about how the play might impair the PRC's image abroad. Chen's attitude toward *War Drums*, not unlike Zhou Enlai's trepidation, draws attention to the play's awkward negotiation of the domestic Chinese audience for whom it was primarily crafted, and the international implications of its global content and foreign characters. While Mao's *Collected Works* was removed from the script entirely and his Congo statement would be deleted from later publication runs, its inclusion in the original betrays the playwrights' conceptual foundation and the domestic reading of world revolution they intended for their Chinese audience.

⁶⁸ Geng Geng, "Chen Yi: Yuanzidan you shenme minzu – yuan kongzheng wengongtuan tuanzhang Huang He de huiyi" [Chen Yi: Atomic Bombs Are What Nationality? – Recollections from Huang He, Head of the Culture Work Group of the Air Force Political Department], *Dangshi bolan* [Close Readings in Party History], (2002, no. 5), 22.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

The leadership's anxieties of foreign reproach notwithstanding, *War Drums* was embraced by the Chinese public in its myriad adaptations. In addition to the 'dialogue drama,' stills of the stage production were fashioned into comic book (*lianhuanhua*) and slideshow (*huandengpian*) form, thereby bringing the Sinicized Congolese struggle beyond Chinese cities and well into the rural countryside. An additional comic book form soon emerged out of Tianjin, featuring cartoon illustrations of the hulking, determined Congolese guerillas. On the stage, drama troupes across the country adapted *War Drums* into Chinese theatrical forms including: Yue opera, Yu opera (*Yuju*), Shanghai opera (*Huju*), Beijing opera, Qinqiang opera (*Qinqiang*), and Hebei clapper opera (*Hebei bangzi*).⁷¹ A motion picture film adaptation was slated to be made by the August First Film Studio of the People's Liberation Army (*Bayi Dianying Zhipianchang*) in 1966, shot on the tropical Chinese island of Hainan, and featuring Chinese actors in 'blackface' makeup portraying the Congolese characters. Indeed, as the stage play itself was performed extensively throughout 1965 and 1966, Chinese actors in black and brown makeup always played the Congolese roles, perhaps bespeaking an important performative act on the part of PRC artists eager to play a direct and contributing role in world revolution. In addition to regular standing performances, *War Drums* was a key component of Workers' Day and National Day celebrations in Beijing and Shanghai in 1965, with these stagings co-organized by the Chinese Foreign Ministry itself.⁷²

⁷¹ Both Yu opera (originating from Henan province) and Hebei clapper opera (emerging from Hebei province) date back to the Qing dynasty, and are unique in their incorporation of wooden clappers producing a distinct musical sound. Shanghai opera, also rising to prominence during the Qing era, features a host of traditional Chinese instruments and is typically performed in the Shanghainese dialect. Similar to Yu and Hebei clapper opera, the Shaanxi folk dramatic form Qinqiang opera features wooden clappers. Qinqiang is considered to be the oldest Chinese dramatic form, with its origins dating back to the Qin dynasty (221-207 BCE).

⁷² See Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu 'wuyi' qijian wenhua huodong anpai de qingkuang [The Circumstances Regarding Planning Cultural Activities During the International Worker's Day Period]," April 26, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00444, 1, Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu guoqingjie qijian benshi wenhua huodong anpai de baogao [Report Regarding Planning Cultural Activities During Beijing's National Day Period]," September 17, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00444, 11, Beijingshi Wenhuaaju

War Drums, and its exotic tale of revolutionary struggle, enthralled PRC critics who implored the Chinese masses to embrace it. Linking *War Drums* with *Letters from the South* to praise the PLA drama group's innovations, the journal *Chinese Theatre* declared

...Works reflecting the international struggle have gradually begun taking the stage and gaining attention, initiating an important phase. This makes the [Chinese] people extremely happy. The Chinese people's struggle and the struggle of the world's people – particularly the people of Asia, Africa, Latin America – are connected like flesh and blood, and go through thick and thin together. Our theatrical plays must thus naturally reflect our united struggle to inspire the masses. In this respect, the culture workers of the PLA walk along the forefront of the theatrical battlefield with the highest revolutionary passion and political sensitivity, and with the courageous spirit of innovation; we must very well learn from the PLA and their comrades-in-arms.⁷³

Several reviewers noted that the play captured perfectly just how much the Chinese people stand by the Congolese people, and support African revolution in general.⁷⁴ Building on the story's latently patronizing portrayal of anti-imperialist struggle in Africa, the writer Han Beiping wrote: "African patriots and revolutionaries fighting in the jungle, please accept our tribute. At the imperialists and at colonialists new and old, we all throw our spears!"⁷⁵ Many critics were keen to inform the Chinese readership through popular periodicals that *War Drums* offered a boost of inspiration and support to revolutionaries abroad. As the widely circulated *World Affairs* described one performance,

War Drums on the Equator has not only profoundly moved Chinese spectators, but for countless foreign friends, and especially for African friends, it has brought up even deeper sentiments. A few African friends weeping warm tears at the play's conclusion continually applauded, and thanked the Chinese people and artists for giving such support to their struggle. They said: "Your play brought us right back to the jungles of Africa to participate in the fight." They said: "Your performance was excellent,

[Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guoqing qijian yishu biaoyan tuanti shangyan jiemu [Program of Artistic Performances During the National Day Period]," undated *ibid.*, 15, and Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Shanghaishi wenhuaaju yanchuchu gongzuo jihua ji you anpai diaopei jutuan yanchu de baogao [Report on the Work Plans of the Shanghai Bureau of Culture Performance Office and Planned Allocations for Performances]," undated, SMA, B172-5-993, 28.

⁷³ "Xiju zhanxian shang de shengli" [Victory on the Theatre Frontline], *Xijubao* [*Chinese Theatre*], (1965, no. 2), 19.

⁷⁴ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 19, "Chongman geming jiqing de 《Chidao zhangu》" [*War Drums on the Equator*, Brimming with Revolutionary Fervor], *Shijie Zhishi* [*World Affairs*], (1965, no. 6), 28, and "Leiqi zhangu, zhichu touqiang - 《Chidao zhangu》 guanhou gan" [Begin Beating the War Drum, Throw Forth the Spear – Reflections Upon Viewing *War Drums on the Equator*], *Xijubao* [*Chinese Theatre*], (1965, no. 2), 21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

destroying the power and prestige of the enemy and displaying the aspirations of our people. You are our genuine friend, our true brothers!”⁷⁶

So as to corroborate the world revolutionary significance of *War Drums*, the monthly *Chinese Theatre* even offered a guest review of the play by a Nigerian teacher living in the PRC. He proceeded to write scarcely of the Congo or his native Nigeria, and instead highlighted the PRC’s support for “African revolution” and “the African people” in broad strokes.⁷⁷ His review further discussed *War Drums* in the context of a broad, surging community of global revolutionaries “kindling the raging flames of revolution” in “many places around the world.”⁷⁸ Though, to be sure, *War Drums on the Equator* offered its Chinese audience a more thorough elaboration on the Congolese revolutionary struggle than they had previously encountered, the play was designed to signify more than merely the Congo. Owing to the success and popular fascination with *War Drums*, it would not be the last Congo-inspired Chinese drama.

Though *War Drums* spawned a host of derivative original Chinese creative stories lionizing Congolese revolutionaries, two rose to the forefront: the spoken-drama *Thunder in the Congo* (*Gangguo fenglei*) and the dance drama (*wuju*) *The Raging Congo River* (*Gangguohe zai nuhou*). *Thunder in the Congo* offers a tale closely based on the storyline of *War Drums*, with Belgian colonialism handing the torch to American imperialism under tacit UN sanction with the grand design of extracting Congolese minerals by exploiting native black labor. Race is paramount in the story, and the divide between white and non-white is presented as irreconcilable. Tapping into this division is the importance attached to foreign friends and the association of a global support network with national development and modernization. “We

⁷⁶ “Chongman geming jiqing de 《Chidao zhang》” [War Drums on the Equator, Brimming with Revolutionary Fervor], *Shijie zhishi* [World Affairs], (1965, no. 6), 29.

⁷⁷ “Feizhou geming de zhang” [The War Drums of African Revolution], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 2), 21.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

need the help of foreign friends,” one Congolese character proclaims, “we need to vanquish poverty and backwardness and step forward alongside the whole world.”⁷⁹ *Thunder* lays out the Congo’s options very clearly: permit the U.S.-UN axis to open mining pits on the promise of also building hospitals, libraries, and schools, or retain sovereignty and build on the “tremendous support” offered to the Lumumba regime by its budding friendships in the non-white, recently decolonized, developing world – referenced indirectly as “three Afro-Asian countries,” but unmistakably Indonesia, North Vietnam and China.⁸⁰ Just as did *War Drums*, *Thunder* takes aim not merely at Western neo-colonialism led by U.S. imperialism, but also at the revisionist Soviet Union and its moral bankruptcy, standing idly by while revolution sweeps across the decolonizing global south. China, the play seems to suggest, is not only a loyal supporter of the Congolese peoples’ struggle, but is also the original trailblazer of the path to liberation, independence, and modernity the Congo must now chart. As *Thunder in the Congo* was performed throughout 1965 critics read the story in precisely this manner. One reviewer proudly noted that China’s “path to victory” was currently being walked by the South Vietnamese people and had already been traversed by the people of the Dominican Republic, before asking: “Are not the Congolese people currently moving along this route to victory?”⁸¹

The Raging Congo River likewise taught its Chinese audience of the PRC’s inspiring leadership of world revolution. The published script is prefaced by Mao’s statement on the Congo reprinted in full, and the “first light of morning” coming to end the “black night of Africa” brings Mao’s solar imagery firmly to mind.⁸² As a musical the play is grounded in its songs, the content of which is derived explicitly from *War Drums*. Race is again central, with one song

⁷⁹ *Gangguo fenglei* [*Thunder in the Congo*], Beijing: Zhongguo Xiju chubanshe [Chinese Theatre Press], (1965), 16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸¹ Lin Yuan, “Xiongxiong liehuo, gungun fenglei – tan huaju 《Gangguo fenglei》” [Raging Flames, Rolling Thunder – Discussing *Thunder in the Congo*], *Xijubao* [*Chinese Theatre*], (1965, no. 9), 39-40.

⁸² *Gangguohe zai nuhuo* [*The Raging Congo River*], (1966), 37-42.

dedicated to, and performed by, Warren, the African-American officer who defects to “stand up” alongside his “black brothers.”⁸³ At once tapping into the realities of American racism both abroad and at home during the concurrent Civil Rights Movement, Warren laments: “In Africa, the fresh blood of black people trickles all across the land / In America, black corpses sway from tree branches!”⁸⁴ Like *War Drums* before it, *Raging* offers a highly romanticized and stereotypical image of the Congolese guerilla fighters, rhetorically animalizing them as “black lions,” and highlighting their bows, arrows, spears, and war drums.⁸⁵ The playwrights were keen to offer their Chinese audience an exotic story of world revolution, and spectators were not disappointed.

Raging was performed widely after its inaugural staging in mid-1965, and shared the stage with *War Drums* as part of the National Day celebrations that year in Beijing.⁸⁶ In its review of the play, *People’s Music* praised the work as evidence of the development of revolutionary Chinese art, and suggested that it accorded with an organically occurring popular Chinese interest in revolution abroad. “Nowadays, the Chinese people do not just care deeply for our own socialist revolution, but also hold great enthusiasm for the revolutionary movement of the world’s people,” the review opined, and *Raging* identifies how “the internationalist spirit of the Chinese people” has produced this new work of “revolutionary dance dramatic art.”⁸⁷ As the play captivated Chinese audiences throughout 1965 and 1966, no one much cared if it inspired popular internationalism or was a product of it; all that really mattered was getting the

⁸³ Ibid., 43-45.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 58.

⁸⁶ See Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu guoqingjie qijian benshi wenhua huodong anpai de baogao [Report Regarding Planning Cultural Activities During Beijing’s National Day Period],” September 17, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00444, 11, Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guoqing qijian yishu biaoyan tuanti shangyan jiemu [Program of Artistic Performances During the National Day Period],” undated, *ibid.*, 15, see also *Jiefang Ribao* [Liberation Daily] (Shanghai), June, 28, 1965, 4.

⁸⁷ “Fanzhiminzhuyi de songge – wuju 《Gangguohe zai nuhuo》” [Ode to Anti-colonialism – Reflections Upon Viewing *The Raging Congo River*], *Renmin Yinyue* [People’s Music], (1965, no. 4), 13.

Congo, Africa, world revolution and China's place therein, firmly diffused into the Chinese popular ether, and *War Drums on the Equator* and its subsequent derivatives did precisely this in the mid-1960s. The Vietnam War, however, continued to rage. As the conflict intensified, it remained a mainstay on the Chinese stage.

Fury at Coconut Grove

As the U.S. dramatically escalated its military presence in Vietnam in March-April 1965, China experienced a corresponding and all-encompassing campaign of “resist America, aid Vietnam” at home. Modeled on the “resist America, aid Korea” movement during the Korean War, the Vietnam-version looked to Chinese artists to play their part in mobilizing the PRC citizenry. After the Standing Committee of the People's Congress called upon them to do just that, an April 1965 editorial in *Chinese Theatre* pledged playwrights would “actively use their weapon of the dramatic arts” to expose the truth about U.S. imperialism and support the Vietnamese people.⁸⁸ Among the fully original productions that would emerge was *Fury at Coconut Grove*, written by a team headed by Ren Hongju who also penned *The Raging Congo River* and contributed to the classic *The East is Red*. A large-scale dance drama musical (*gewuju*), *Fury* was first performed as part of Beijing's 1965 Worker's Day festivities.⁸⁹ Later that month, it grew to prominence following a mass Beijing event called the “Singing Rally in Support of the Vietnamese People's Struggle Against the American Invaders,” and drew upon over four thousand famous actors from several noteworthy artistic groups from across the

⁸⁸ “Zhankai zhichi Yuenan renmin fanMei aiguo douzheng de xiju xuanchuan” [Launch Dramatic Propaganda in Support of the Vietnamese People's Patriotic Struggle Against the U.S.], *Xijubao* [*Chinese Theatre*], (1965, no. 4), 2.

⁸⁹ Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu ‘wuyi’ qijian wenhua huodong anpai de qingkuang [The Circumstances Regarding Planning Cultural Activities During the International Worker's Day Period],” April 26, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00444, 1. Also performed at the event were *War Drums*, *Letters*, and its Pingju opera derivative, *Flames from the South*.

country to fill its many roles.⁹⁰ Grandiose in scale and Sinicizing the Vietnamese struggle into Chinese dance dramatic form, *Fury* stimulated eyes and hearts throughout the PRC.

As a musical, *Fury* broaches the Vietnamese people's heroic struggle broadly through eight songs capturing "an unparalleled anger and rage toward U.S. imperialism."⁹¹ Among its familiar themes is the rhetorical insistence on a unified force of global revolutionaries, spread out across geographic space but seemingly sharing a historical moment of the world turning in their favor. "From the Mekong River to the Yalu River, from Beijing to Hanoi," one song rang out, "everywhere is praising, praising your faithful and unyielding, mighty soldiers!"⁹² If revolutionary solidarity is at work in *Fury*, the ubiquitous solar imagery signifying Mao's transnational leadership is also present to remind a Chinese audience of the heartbeat pacing this global leftist pulse. The song entitled "Red sun, quickly shine all over Vietnam" helps cement the PRC's leading role in world revolution.⁹³

Fury also offers constant reminders of the need to root out "traitors" (*maiguozei*), dedicates a eulogy to the war hero Nguyen Van Troi, and insists on the need to be prepared to "protect every inch of territory" and "grab any weapon" at a moment's notice to "destroy U.S. imperialism."⁹⁴ The message to Chinese viewers was clear: though the battle here dramatized is currently playing out in Vietnam, we could be next; heroes are needed to root out undermining enemies at home, and protect against foreign enemies approaching.

Fury's script was deliberate in the urgency of its message, and this point was not lost on the cast as they prepped for performing it. As *People's Music* reported, and just as with *Letters*

⁹⁰ "Tongchoudikai, shi zuo houdun – shoudu juxing 'Zhichi Yuenan renmin kangMei jiuguo douzheng geyong dahui'" [Share a Bitter Hatred for the Enemy, Pledge to Support – Beijing Hosts the "Singing Rally to Support the Vietnamese People's Struggle to Resist the U.S. and Save the Nation"], *Renmin Yinyue* [*People's Music*], (1965, no. 3), 14-15.

⁹¹ *Yelin nuhuo* [*Fury in the Coconut Grove*], Beijing: Yinyue chubanshe [Music Press], (1965), forward.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

from the South before it, the actors and crew treated their rehearsals and performances as military battles in the wider struggle. “Each musical note is an artillery shell” and “the rehearsal stage is the battlefield” became the cast’s mantras during their preparations.⁹⁵ Akin to the writing group behind *War Drums on the Equator*, the rehearsing performers of *Fury* likewise claimed that staging the play “educated” them on the need to “keep the homeland in their hearts, with their eyes on the world.”⁹⁶ When a Shanghai-based troupe began rehearsing their own production of *Fury*, they were no less ardent. “In one hand a musical instrument, in the other a weapon; we are ready at all times to fight shoulder to shoulder with our Vietnamese brothers,” became the guiding principle to their performances.⁹⁷ In answering the CCP’s call to offer revolutionary Chinese art about the international struggle, dramatists in the PRC had delightedly carved out their very own imagined but direct role to play on the frontline of world revolution.

This process, of course, was far from organic. In Shanghai, for example, before rehearsals of *Fury* could commence, drama troupes were required to undergo ‘war preparation mobilization’ (*beizhan dongyuan*). As reports of the training indicate, there was much political work to be done with the cast and crew, tending to ideological problems which included being “numbed by peace” (*heping mabi sixiang*).⁹⁸ For some, Vietnam felt too distant to have any effect on them personally. One actor felt confident that American planes could never reach the

⁹⁵ “Yong women de gesheng he Yuenan renmin gongtong zhandou! – ji shoudu yinyuejie zhiyuan Yuenan renmin kangMei jiuguo douzheng de chuanguo he yanchu” [Use Our Singing Voices to Fight Alongside the Vietnamese People! – Recalling the Creation and Performance of Beijing’s Musical Community’s Songs in Support of the Vietnamese People’s Struggle to Resist the U.S. and Save the Nation], *Renmin Yinyue* [*People’s Music*], (1965, no. 2), 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ “Zhandou gewu jingzheng chun – ji diliujie ‘Shanghai zhi chun’” [The Spring Competition of Fighting Songs and Dance – Recounting the 6th ‘Shanghai Spring’], *Renmin Yinyue* [*People’s Music*], (1965, no. 3), 31.

⁹⁸ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu Bangongshi [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Sixiang Dongxiang, 57: gejuyuan jinxing beizhan dongyuan qianhou sixiang fanying [Ideological Trends, 57 – Ideological Reflections From Start to Finish After Launching War Preparation Mobilization in the Opera House],” July 14, 1965, SMA, A22-2-1276, 61-62.

PRC.⁹⁹ Still others were terrified of war, afraid to lose their own lives and feeling hopeless amidst the thought that the PRC would be unable to draw on Soviet support in the event of war. Gradually, the report spelled out, these ideas began to fade as the cast came to understand the nuances of the situation in Vietnam. Between the foolishness of U.S. expansion there, the guiding leadership of the CCP at home, and the PRC's mounting strength, their training taught them, they began to feel confident. Increasingly, the actors came to view *Fury* as a weapon of its own, and some even expressed a desire to go and fight in Vietnam. As they took to the stage to perform *Fury*, the Shanghai troupe and dramatic groups all over the PRC just like it assumed what they felt was a tangible role in the world revolutionary struggle.

Following its initial performances in Beijing and Shanghai during May 1965, *Fury at Coconut Grove* was staged widely over the ensuing year. Among these performances, local efforts in Ji'an in Jiangxi province, Hangzhou, and Kunming in the far southwest were particularly well received.¹⁰⁰ Alongside *Letters and Flames from the South*, *Fury* was regularly performed for foreign guests and especially Vietnamese groups of varying levels of stature.¹⁰¹ Allegedly, Ho Chi Minh himself took in a performance of *Fury* during a visit to the PRC, purportedly ascending the stage following the play to laud the authenticity of the characters' grass shoes.¹⁰² Regardless of whether or not "Uncle Ho" actually blessed *Fury* with his endorsement, the Chinese public embraced it en masse.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰⁰ See "YuanYue kangMei de gesheng xiangbian quanguo" [The Sounds of Supporting Vietnam and Resisting America Echo Across the Country], *Renmin Yinyue [People's Music]*, (1965, no. 3), 16, and "Yunnansheng、Kunmingshi xijujie juxing yuanYue kangMei lianhe yanchu" [The Dramatic Community of Yunnan Province and Kunming City Hold a Joint Performance Supporting Vietnam and Resisting America], *Xijubao [Chinese Theatre]*, (1965, no. 6), 8.

¹⁰¹ See "Yuenan dianying xiju daibiaotuan lai woguo fangwen" [A Vietnamese Film and Drama Delegation Visits the PRC], *Xijubao [Chinese Theatre]*, (1965, no. 9), 31.

¹⁰² See "Zhou Enlai daoyan dongfang juechang 'Dongfanghong'" [Zhou Enlai Directs the Eastern Peak of Perfection *The East is Red*], *Dangshi zongheng [Review of Party History]*, (2006, no. 2), 8. This article does not specify the dates of Ho's visit to the PRC, nor when he might have attended the play.

Critical reviews of *Fury* praised its ability to inspire both the Chinese people and revolutionaries abroad. One commentator highlighted how the play not only allowed people to better understand the nature of the struggle, but also captured the “spirit of the times” (*shidai jingshen*).¹⁰³ The journal *Frontline* hailed *Fury* for “accompanying” the “resist America, aid Vietnam” campaign afoot in the PRC, and said it “performed perfectly the function of mobilizing and educating the people.”¹⁰⁴ Assuming the role of foreign corroborator, a Vietnamese student living in the PRC reviewed the play for *People’s Music*, arguing that *Fury* not only bridges the physical divide separating China from the Vietnamese frontline, but that the play offers palpable support to his battling countrymen and has become one of their sharpest weapons to attack the U.S. imperialist invaders.¹⁰⁵ *Fury’s* success was thanks to the educational impact of Mao Zedong Thought, the student continued, and only works of revolutionary art in this mold can sufficiently capture the “revolutionary age” they are currently enjoying.¹⁰⁶ *Fury at Coconut Grove* was not simply about Vietnam, Chinese audiences were being told, but about a global community of revolutionaries surging forward at their long-awaited historical moment.

The Party too was pleased with *Fury*. At the September 1965 National Conference for leading Culture officials, Vice-Minister of Culture Xiao Wangdong praised both *Letters from the South* and *Fury* as exemplary revolutionary modern dramas serving an important political function.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, local propaganda officials incorporated *Fury* into their political training routines. The Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department used *Fury* and *Letters* as a

¹⁰³ “Zan 《Yelin nuhuo》” [In Praise of *Fury at Coconut Grove*], *Renmin Yinyue* [*People’s Music*], (1965, no. 3), 13.

¹⁰⁴ “Yingxiong renmin de yingxiong gesong – Zan 《Yelin nuhuo》” [Heroically Extolling the Heroic Peoples - In Praise of *Fury at Coconut Grove*], *Qianxian* [*Frontline*], (1965, no. 10), 16.

¹⁰⁵ “Yuenan renmin kangMei jiuguo douzheng de songge - 《Yelin nuhuo》 deng jiemu guanhou” [Extolling the Vietnamese People’s Struggle to Resist the U.S. and Save the Nation – Reflections Upon Viewing *Fury at Coconut Grove* and Other Plays], *Renmin Yinyue* [*People’s Music*], (1965, no. 3), 12.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ “Xiao Wangdong tongzhi zai quanguo wenhuaju (ting) zhang huiyishang de jianghua [Comrade Xiao Wangdong’s Speech at the National Conference of Culture Leaders],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-659, 147.

critical component of their “aid Vietnam, resist America contextual education” campaign administered citywide to various organizations, factories, shops, schools, communes, and neighborhoods.¹⁰⁸ Zhou Enlai too firmly endorsed the play, and had even planned for the sequel to the beloved *The East is Red* to emulate *Fury*’s emphasis on supporting world revolution and the great unity of the world’s peoples.¹⁰⁹

Before long, the film version of *Fury at Coconut Grove* was ready for release in the fall of 1965. Like the film adaption of *War Drums*, it was made by the August First Film Studio of the PLA, and was swiftly shot in two months.¹¹⁰ Screened at the 1965 National Day festivities in Beijing and again the following year during Worker’s Day celebrations, the film facilitated wider circulation of *Fury*’s story to an audience outside of major cities.¹¹¹ In a review by the periodical *Film Art*, it was deemed a “gift” to the 30 million people of Vietnam.¹¹² But, the reviewer continued, it could also be considered a present from the Vietnamese people to the Chinese people since its rich content offers them an “invaluable revolutionary lesson.”¹¹³ In addition to the film, derivative plays began to sprout up across the country. The Pingju opera *War Beneath the Betel Nut Trees* appeared in the summer of 1965, and its script was sold nationwide at state-run Xinhua bookstores. *Fiery Coconut Village (Huoyecun)*, a Yue opera boasting a female

¹⁰⁸ Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], “Guanyu yuanYue kangMei xingshi jiaoyu de qingkuang he jinhou yijian de baogao [Report Regarding the Circumstances of Situational Education on ‘Supporting Vietnam, Resisting America’ and Views for the Future],” June 21, 1965, SMA, A22-2-1295, 17.

¹⁰⁹ “Zhou Enlai daoyan dongfang juechang ‘Dongfanghong’” [Zhou Enlai Directs the Eastern Peak of Perfection *The East is Red*], *Dangshi zongheng [Review of Party History]*, (2006, no. 2), 8.

¹¹⁰ Wu Di ed., *Zhongguo dianying yanjiu ziliao [Documents on Chinese Film Research, 1949-1979]*, 2: 480.

¹¹¹ See Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu guoqingjie qijian benshi wenhua huodong anpai de baogao [Report Regarding Planning Cultural Activities During Beijing’s National Day Period],” September 17, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00444, 12, and Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu ‘wuyi’ qijian wenhua huodong anpai qingkuang jianbao [Briefing Regarding the Circumstances of Planning Cultural Activities During the International Worker’s Day Period],” April 25, 1966, BMA, 164-002-00017, 2.

¹¹² “Yingxiong renmin de zange - 《Yelin nuhuo》 guanhou gan” [Ode to a Heroic People – Reflections Upon Viewing *Fury at Coconut Grove*], *Dianying yishu [Film Art]*, (1965, no. 5), 61.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

protagonist, first emerged at Shanghai's 1965 National Day celebrations and was received well by audiences there.¹¹⁴ *Fury*'s most popular heir, however, was surely the fellow dance musical *Sea of Fire in the Vast Mountains* (*Changshan Huohai*).

In the works since late 1964, when *Sea of Fire* first ascended the stage in early 1966 *Fury*, *Letters* and a host of other original tales of the Vietnamese struggle had stirred a fever pitch across the PRC. Like *Letters* and *War Drums*, *Sea of Fire* was anointed with the CCP's stately touch, a product of the Culture Work Group of the Political Department of the PLA's Air Force. Further still, the play's principle patron was none other than Zhou Enlai. In the summer of 1964, as Vietnamese guerillas commenced regular attacks on U.S. air bases in the South, Zhou felt an original Chinese play capturing these events was needed to spur the "resist America, aid Vietnam" campaign at home.¹¹⁵ Zhou turned to the cultural arm of the Air Force for the project and, before long, a group of eight playwrights travelled to North Vietnam as the Chinese People's Liberation Army Cultural Investigation Group (*wenhua kaochatuan*). The group spent three months there between December 1964 and February 1965, at almost precisely the moment when top culture and propaganda officials including Zhou Yang were internally discussing the need for PRC artists to travel to Vietnam and gain inspiration for stories and plays.¹¹⁶

Sea of Fire's take on the guerilla struggle in South Vietnam pleased its top official sponsors and general audiences alike. First performed in the winter of 1966, the inaugural audience included high-level culture and military figures including: Ye Jianying, Li Xiannian, Su

¹¹⁴ Shanghaishi Wenhujia [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu chunjie, guoqingjie wenhua gongzuo de dasuan ji qingkuang huibao [Report Regarding the Plans and Circumstances of Culture Work During Spring Festival and National Day]," undated, SMA, B172-5-896, 71.

¹¹⁵ Geng Geng, "Daxing gewuju 《Changshan huohai》 de taiqian muhou" [Behind the Scenes of the large-scale drama *Sea of Fire*], *Dangshi bolan* [Close Readings in Party History], (2005, no. 6), 35.

¹¹⁶ "San yue Ershiliu ri xiawu xuanchuanbu zuotanhui shang Zhou Yang tongzhi, Xu Liqun tongzhi, Lin Mohan tongzhi de jianghua [Speeches by Comrades Zhou Yang, Xu Liqun, and Lin Mohan on the Afternoon of March 26 at the Central Department of Propaganda Symposium]," undated, SXPA, 232-2-661, 9.

Yu, Yang Chengwu, and Guo Moruo.¹¹⁷ After Zhou viewed the play a second time, he apparently convened a discussion about it between members of the top leadership and prominent officials in the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Culture. After suggesting a few revisions, they fully endorsed *Sea of Fire*, and the play began its run for general audiences. Though it would only ever be performed 15 times before being interrupted by the Cultural Revolution, the musical drew wide praise.

In a joint review of *Sea of Fire* and two productions focusing on the story of Nguyen Van Troi, *Chinese Theatre* lauded the playwrights' willingness to enter the fight. They "now use pens to write plays but, if need be," the review argued, "they would at once pick up a weapon and fight alongside the South Vietnamese people!"¹¹⁸ In a review appearing in *People's Music*, the famed composer Wu Zuqiang summoned the familiar suggestion that *Sea of Fire* did not just inspire the Chinese people, but livened revolutionary peoples abroad too.¹¹⁹ Perhaps in an effort to emphasize this point, Zhou Enlai actually organized a performance of *Sea of Fire* for a visiting Vietnamese group in 1967. The visitors had tears in their eyes, one report suggested, and unceasingly applauded at the play's conclusion.¹²⁰ As with the host of other original, internationalist Chinese dramas capturing events in Vietnam and the Congo, *Sea of Fire's* authenticity was being corroborated straight from the horse's mouth. World revolution, the transnational community of global revolutionaries, and China's implicit leadership of this group, Chinese audiences gathered, were not figments of their imagination. History was on the side of

¹¹⁷ Geng Geng, "Daxing gewuju 《Changshan huohai》 de taiqian muhou" [Behind the Scenes of the large-scale drama *Sea of Fire*], *Dangshi bolan* [Close Readings in Party History], (2005, no. 6), 39.

¹¹⁸ "Yuenan nanfang renmin kangMei douzheng de gesong" [Extolling the Southern Vietnamese People's Struggle Against the U.S.], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1966, no. 1), 25.

¹¹⁹ "Yuenan renmin zhanzheng shengli de zange – gewuju 《Changshan huohai》 guanhou" [In Praise of the Victory of the Vietnamese People's War – Reflections Upon Viewing *Sea of Fire*], *Renmin Yinyue* [People's Music], (1966, no. 1), 2.

¹²⁰ Geng Geng, "Daxing gewuju 《Changshan huohai》 de taiqian muhou" [Behind the Scenes of the large-scale drama *Sea of Fire*], *Dangshi bolan* [Close Readings in Party History], (2005, no. 6), 39.

the revolutionary forces, and Chinese artists and audiences could now play an active and direct role in world revolution simply by engaging with these dramatic works.

Perhaps deeming this popular engagement with internationalist revolutionary drama not enough, the CCP went even further by encouraging amateur dramatic writing and performance. Local officials nudged ordinary people to engage in writing their own creative stories, even initiating official campaigns of mass creative writing (*qunzhongxing de chuanguo yundong*).¹²¹ The result was a plethora of small-scale, locally performed dramatic works, many of which broached internationalist themes. An amateur, student dialogue drama troupe at Fudan University in Shanghai, for example, produced such exemplary works during a creative writing campaign that the Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department began promoting their pieces.¹²² Among them were plays highlighting the anti-U.S. struggle bearing titles including *Praise from the South* and *Advance Over the Bloodstains of the Martyrs*.

In Shaanxi province, small-scale original plays popped up in a host of cities, with titles such as *Lyndon B. Johnson*, *A Sorry Figure*, *Calling to Account Lyndon B. Johnson*, and *American Devils, Get Lost*.¹²³ The latter two proved so popular that local propaganda officials in Chang'an County quickly moved to incorporate the works as part of their 'war preparation

¹²¹ See, for example, Beijingshi Wenhua ju Dangzu [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture Party Section], "Guanyu jiaqiang xiandai jumu chuanguo de baogao [Report Regarding Strengthening the Writing of Modern Dramatic Works]," November 16, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00102, 3.

¹²² Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei Xuanchuanbu Bangongshi [Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department], "Sixiang Dongxiang 65: Fudan daxue yeyu huajutuan junxing chuanguo huodong de yixie qingkuang [Ideological Trends, 65 - Some Circumstances Surrounding Launching Writing Campaigns in Amateur Dialogue Drama Troupes at Fudan University]," July 20, 1965, SMA, A22-2-1276, 169-170.

¹²³ See Zhonggong Shaanxisheng Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu [Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department], "Guanyu dianying, xiqu chuanguo deng wenti de tongzhi, huibao he baogao [Notice and Reports Regarding Issues Pertaining to the Writing of Films and Dramatic Plays]," undated, SXPA, 123-3-1077, 164, and Xinbei Dadui gongzuozu [Xinbei Production Brigade Work Team], "Zai Xi'an dongche liang duan xiang zhigong jinxing beizhan xuanchuan shidian qingkuang baogao [Report on Attempts to Engage Workers in War Preparation Propaganda in Xi'an Eastern Vehicle Factory]," September 21, 1965, SXPA, 123-3-1067, 89.

propaganda' campaign (*beizhan xuanchuan*).¹²⁴ Soon after, the Shaanxi Provincial Propaganda Department lauded Chang'an County's efforts, and recommended all Shaanxi counties follow suit staging such local-level internationalist productions.

Since small-scale works could be produced more quickly, they were occasionally even better reflections of international events as they were occurring. This was certainly the case with the Shanghai original play, *Two Bloody Handprints*, whose tale of racial violence in the American South was performed at the city's 1963 National Day festivities, mere months after the horrifying police perpetrated violence in Birmingham, Alabama that May.¹²⁵ Through smaller local-level productions and grandiose nationally circulated works alike, creative Chinese stories of the international realm formed an important part of revolutionizing the cultural sphere, and succeeded in brining the global down to local China. By performing these plays in familiar Chinese dramatic forms, world revolution was Sinicized such that a broader, domestic PRC audience representing various levels of society and education could now more easily receive the message the Party so wanted to disseminate. Perhaps fearing this strategy might exclude the less culturally literate segments of society, the CCP took its plan one step further: world revolution would be popularized into folk and mass Chinese cultural forms.

Beyond the Stage: The World in Folk Chinese Cultural Form

If the internationalist narratives the CCP sought to disseminate were going to reach and resonate with a wide swath of the Chinese population, they needed to be adaptive. It was precisely that propaganda art was offered in high *and* mass cultural forms, Barbara Mittler

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Shanghaishi Wenhuaaju [Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture], "Guanyu chunjie, wuyi, guoqing yanchu ji zuzhi wanhui de jihua, baogao, yijian [Plans, Reports, and Views Regarding Spring Festival, International Worker's Day, and National Day Performances and Organizing Evening Events]," undated, SMA, B172-5-720, 100.

argues, that it gained such wide acclaim in China during the Cultural Revolution.¹²⁶ The immediate pre-Cultural Revolution years were no different. In early 1965, *Chinese Theatre* gleefully reported that a gamut of Vietnam War inspired folk dramas were being written and staged all across the country, deploying forms including ‘living newspaper plays’ (*huobaoju*) and ‘street corner dramas’ (*jietouju*).¹²⁷ Yet folk art treating internationalist content was not limited to covering the Vietnamese struggle, nor was it confined simply to dramatic performance. Among the most commonly deployed folk forms for purposes of *domestic internationalism*, were slideshows (*huandengpian*), wooden puppet plays (*mu’ou*), ‘living newspaper plays,’ and comic books (*lianhuanhua*).

While slideshows were far from a traditional folk cultural form and were still quite modern in 1960s, they formed an important part of the CCP’s propaganda reach beyond major urban centers. Plays and films were frequently adapted into slideshow form, and a narrator would read out the actions and lines of the characters while the audience took in the projected images. The slideshow adaptation of *War Drums on the Equator* featured actual stills shots from the original production, accompanied by an abridged script.¹²⁸ At a conference of the country’s top culture officials in September 1965, Zhou Yang attested to the power of slideshows arguing that alongside actual artistic performances and published periodicals they formed a critical piece of culture work in the countryside.¹²⁹ A Beijing Municipal Culture Bureau report from the same year articulated the same point. Referred to by some local viewers as “land movies” (*tudianying*) or “small films” (*xiaodianying*), the report pointed out, they seemed to be a “good way to

¹²⁶ Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution*, 17.

¹²⁷ “Gedi fenfen shangyan 《Nanfang laixin》 zhiyuan Yuenan kangMei jiuguo douzheng” [Places All Around the Country are Staging *Letters from the South* and Supporting Vietnam’s Struggle to Resist the U.S. and Save Its Country], *Xijubao* [Chinese Theatre], (1965, no. 3), 25.

¹²⁸ See *Chidao zhangu* [*War Drums on the Equator*], slideshow, author’s collection.

¹²⁹ “Zhou Yang tongzhi zai quanguo wenhuaju (ting) zhang huiyishang de baogao—1965 nian 9 yue 15, 16 ri [Comrade Zhou Yang’s Report at the National Conference of Culture Leaders—September 15 and 16, 1965],” undated, SXPA, 232-2-658, 33.

educate people.”¹³⁰ One cadre was quoted as saying he enjoyed slideshows since their relative brevity ensured “one does not get behind in their work”, “nor do they have to spend money.”¹³¹ Accordingly, the Beijing Culture Bureau, concluded, slideshow screenings should continue to be used to accompany the Four Clean-Ups Campaign and the Socialist Education Movement in the rural areas surrounding the capital. Slideshows were not only culturally accessible, cheap to view, and required far less infrastructural support than a play or feature film, but they were also relatively straightforward to make. Consequently, local Party branches encouraged ordinary people to make their own slideshow films replete with themes including world revolutionary struggles abroad.

No less popular but considerably more traditional as a folk cultural form, wooden puppet plays were also part of the CCP’s effort to nationalize (*minzuhua*) and ‘mass-ize’ (*dazhonghua*) revolutionary art. Dating back centuries, wooden puppet plays retained a great deal of popular cachet into the Mao-era, and were thus an important route to bring tales of world revolution into cities and rural villages alike. Among the more famous internationalist works was *Southern Youth*, championing youthful South Vietnamese contributions to the struggle there. The play was performed at the 1965 National Day celebrations in Beijing, and was even adapted into a film version (still employing wooden puppets) later that year.¹³² Over the ensuing year, *Battle Song of Coconut Grove* (adapted from *Fury at Coconut Grove*), *Young Heroes of the South*,

¹³⁰ Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Beijingshi huandeng gongzuo qingkuang ji jinhou yijian [Circumstances of Slideshow Work in Beijing and Views for the Future],” August 20, 1965, BMA, 164-001-00463, 1.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guoqing qijian yishu biaoan tuanti shangyan jiemu [Program of Artistic Performances During the National Day Period],” undated, BMA, 164-001-00444, 16; Zhongguo dianying ziliaoguan, Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan dianying yanjiusuo, eds., *Zhongguo yishu yingpian bianmu* (1949-1979) [Catalogue of Chinese Artistic Films (1949-1979)], vol. 2, (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe [Culture and Arts Press]: 1981): 903-904.

Final Act for the Invaders, and a host of other Vietnam-themed wooden puppet plays popped up and received nationwide praise.¹³³

‘Living newspaper plays’ offered audiences a live dramatic performance in a creative blending of fact and fiction. Dating back to the 1920s, these sketches were designed to bring newspaper stories to life in street-corner performances requiring little more than a few willing actors. Unsurprisingly, the ‘living newspaper’ and its implicit emphasis on current events lent itself perfectly to *domestic internationalism*. Owing to the relative ease with which these performances could be prepared, amateur artists were again encouraged to summon their inner performer. One young member of the Communist Youth League and a student at Beijing Normal University, Geng Jilan, tried his hand at writing and, by early 1964, had produced two ‘living newspaper plays’ deemed exemplary by the Beijing Municipal Standing Committee.¹³⁴ *Cuba is Sure to Win* and *Kennedy’s New Clothes* quickly became part of the Beijing government’s culture work efforts in the surrounding countryside.

Among mass and folk cultural forms, however, it was comic books that held the widest possible circulation potential for disseminating internationalist stories. Predating the Song dynasty by some estimates, Chinese comic books continued to have an immense and widespread readership in Mao’s China. Well into the Cultural Revolution era comics were lent by libraries, could be rented from street stalls, and were exchanged between friends and family with such frequency that, as Barbara Mittler explains, they thus had a “much larger market” than

¹³³ Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guanyu ‘wuyi’ qijian wenhua huodong anpai qingkuang jianbao [Briefing Regarding Cultural Activities Plans for the International Worker’s Day Period],” April 25, 1966, BMA, 164-002-00017, 5; Beijingshi Wenhuaaju [Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture], “Guoqing qijian yishu biaoyan tuanti shangyan jiemu [Program of Artistic Performances During the National Day Period],” undated BMA, 164-001-00444, 16.

¹³⁴ “Gaodeng yuan, xiao yeyu wenyi chuangzuo zuozhe mingdan [Roster of Amateur Artistic Writers in Higher-Level Institutions and Schools],” February 10, 1964, BMA, 001-012-00650, 45.

publishing statistics and sales figures could ever report.¹³⁵ Though Chinese comics contain a few short sentences on each page which describe the action, the focal point of the works remain the single elaborate image which adorns each page. While literacy rates in the PRC were rising steadily through the 1950s and 1960s, comics remained comparatively accessible for a less literate audience, and especially so in rural areas with weaker educational resources. It was precisely the vast market of comics, combined with the relative accessibility of the medium that made them ripe for propagandizing world revolution in the mid-1960s. By 1966, comic book adaptations of Nguyen Van Troi's life story, *War Drums on the Equator*, and *Fury at Coconut Grove* were printed in vast quantities in cities all over the country. *War Drums* enjoyed two large-scale comic print runs, one containing still shots from the stage production, the other featuring an illustrated rendering of the story.¹³⁶

Beyond the major folk and mass cultural forms deployed, creative internationalist stories appeared in still more local artistic mediums. The works *Support Cuba* and *The Rage of Lyndon B. Johnson* appeared in 'clapper talk' (*kuaiban*), a quick dialogue play featuring wooden clappers.¹³⁷ *The Cuban People Are Sure to Win* was written as a Beijing *qinshu* play, featuring storytelling with musical accompaniment.¹³⁸ In 1963, *U-2 Spy Plane*, a story premised on the U.S. spy plane shot down over Soviet airspace in 1960, was performed in 'cross-talk' (*xiangsheng; shuanghuang*), a two-man comic show privileging dialogue.¹³⁹ Such small-scale, culturally familiar works not only Sinicized stories of world revolution, but succeeded even in

¹³⁵ Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution*, 355-356.

¹³⁶ See *Chidao zhangu* [*War Drums on the Equator*], (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe [Shanghai People's Art Press], 1965), and *Chidao zhangu* [*War Drums on the Equator*], (Tianjin: Tianjin meishu chubanshe [Tianjin Art Press], 1965).

¹³⁷ "Beijing quyituan qingkuang [Circumstances of Beijing Artistic Troupes]," undated, BMA, 164-001-00401, 29; Zizhouxian Wenjian Weishengju [Zizhou County Bureau of Culture, Education and Public Health], "Guanyu 1965 nian wenhua gongzuo zongjie baogao [Summary Report Regarding 1965 Culture Work]," January 12, 1966, SXPA, 232-2-698, 52.

¹³⁸ "Beijing quyituan qingkuang [Circumstances of Beijing Artistic Troupes]," undated, BMA, 164-001-00401, 29.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

localizing them within the dominant folk culture. Zizhou County in northern Shaanxi province staged elaborate dialogue and Beijing opera plays featuring internationalist themes, but also relied heavily on a number of “aid Vietnam, resist America” themed slideshows, and staged the ‘clapper talk’ *The Rage of Lyndon B. Johnson* to ensure resonance with local residents.¹⁴⁰ Culture officials in Danfeng County in southwestern Shaanxi found both slideshows and cartoon (*manhua*) comics highly successful in educating their constituents to: support Vietnam, resist America, engage in ‘war preparations,’ be conscious of the savagery of the U.S. imperialists, and become filled with “class hatred.”¹⁴¹

Folk and mass cultural mediums – owing to their preexisting familiarity, the minimal infrastructure they required, and their cheap and easy dissemination – were remarkably effective at promoting an interest in world revolution across local China in the mid-1960s. Particularly in rural areas, where technological and educational resources trailed behind those of urban centers, these folk adaptations were invaluable to *domestic internationalism* as a strategy, and to the CCP that strategy served. If Sinicizing the international struggle was an important part of revolutionizing culture so it better catered to the CCP’s political needs, localizing tales of revolution abroad ensured a broad and deep circulation of these ideas across the PRC. Together, this two-pronged, comprehensive approach brought the creative Chinese cultural sphere squarely onto the frontlines of the global revolutionary struggle, and prodded these artists to secure hearts and minds by stimulating eyes and ears.

¹⁴⁰ Zizhouxian Wenjian Weishengju [Zizhou County Bureau of Culture, Education and Public Health], “Guanyu 1965 nian wenhua gongzuo zongjie baogao [Summary Report Regarding 1965 Culture Work],” January 12, 1966, SXPA, 232-2-698, 50-52.

¹⁴¹ Danfengxian Wenjiao Weishengju [Danfeng County Bureau of Culture, Education and Public Health], “Guanyu 1965 nian wenhua gongzuo zongjie baogao [Summary Report Regarding 1965 Culture Work],” February 28, 1966, *ibid.*, 139

Conclusion

The Chinese Communist Party had, since the earliest days of its leadership in Yan'an, placed great political value on the arts. Amidst the Party's mounting anxieties about the future of the Chinese revolution by 1962, therefore, top leaders wasted little time turning to the cultural sphere to reinvigorate popular enthusiasm for the PRC's socialist enterprise. In accordance with its larger strategy of *domestic internationalism*, the call went out for Chinese artists to bring the world onto the Chinese stage. By negotiating popularly cherished, culturally distinct Chinese artistic forms with stories championing the global community of world revolutionary peoples, CCP culture officials not only mapped out works that would resonate with the country's masses, but also offered PRC artists a seemingly direct role to play on the frontlines of world revolution.

With pens as their weapons, state-affiliated and private playwrights alike produced original dramas touching upon events in Vietnam, the Congo, and even the American South. Embedded within these humanizing tales, these artists summoned a swath of the very overarching themes and ideas spouted by the Party in its other internationalist propaganda schemes – among them: race, postcolonial development, modernization, and sovereignty. For the Chinese audiences viewing staged productions and reading these scripts, these themes came together to suggest a broad, imagined global community of revolutionary people surging forward together with history squarely on their side. Often implicitly, these stories made clear it was China and the Chinese people who were at the forefront of this community, shining like a beacon at the terminus of the revolutionary roadmap they had charted for the nonwhite, postcolonial people of the world. As Chinese periodicals would remind domestic viewers, these plays were offering tangible support to their international brethren at that very moment mired in the throes of violent struggle. The performance and viewing of these plays thus constituted a direct,

military action in world revolution, where both actor and audience member took hold of the weapon of art, fired upon the enemy, and extended a hand to their friends abroad.

As large-scale plays including *Letters from the South*, the Nguyen Van Troi story, *War Drums on the Equator*, and *Fury at Coconut Grove* were staged across the country gaining nationwide appeal, they spawned a host of small-scale derivatives representing a variety of traditional, Chinese artistic forms. Just as the CCP had hoped, world revolution was being Sinicized. The Party-approved narrative of events around the world was packaged to a vast Chinese audience in cultural forms they recognized, cherished, and understood. The performance of these works seized upon the aural and the visual, thus welcoming a viewership at varying levels of literacy and society.

To reach a distant largely rural audience, world revolution even transcended the major Sinic cultural forms, being fitted into folk and mass artistic molds including slideshows, wooden puppet plays, 'living newspaper' skits, and comic books. Further still, ordinary people were encouraged to play writer and actor themselves, once again extending anyone and everyone the opportunity to perform their own direct action in the global struggle of the world revolutionary movement. By mid-1966, this popular sense of making direct contributions to the world revolutionary movement would have a profound impact on the early Cultural Revolution; its stakes would be raised, and its global importance simply assumed.

PART III:

THE DIVIDENDS AND PERILS OF *DOMESTIC INTERNATIONALISM*, 1966-68

Chapter 5: All Under Heaven is Chaos:

Internationalism, Treason, and Chinese Nationalism in the Early Cultural Revolution, 1966-68

By 1966, *domestic internationalism* had sown a number of ideas about the wider world with Chinese audiences. Since 1962, the strategy had seized upon a vast array of mediums to implore the existence of a broad, revolutionary community across the world. It had told of history turning in their direction, their time having finally arrived. And it had privileged China's leading role for this group – the PRC an exemplar for how to pursue modernity in a postcolonial existence. As the Party's political campaigns through these years gave way to the Cultural Revolution in mid-1966, these internationalist narratives would continue, now tasked with the all-important role of encouraging people to participate in the mass movement.

While Party-led narratives covering events in Vietnam, the American South, and Palestine would continue through the early years of the Cultural Revolution, a new form of internationalist propaganda would emerge in the form of small booklets. These texts – the first of which were Party-published – began emerging midway through 1966. Above all, they insisted to readers that the Cultural Revolution held world historic importance, impacting events far beyond China. Foreigners around the world were depicted as inspired by the heroic actions of the movement's Red Guards and all young practitioners responding to Mao's call to action. Drawing upon Mao's own cult of personality and alleging his transnational appeal to leftists around the globe, these tracts built on the case made by an earlier *domestic internationalism* about a broad, revolutionary community all surging forward together under the Chairman's leadership, their moment to seize history having finally arrived.

Before long, young Red Guards began churning out their own versions of these texts, likewise extolling the global stakes and transnational appeal of their ostensibly domestic struggle against capitalist restoration and revisionist threats to Chinese socialism. Crafted largely by

Chinese students returning from their studies abroad, the tales they told suggested their own global celebrity, and forged an imagined simultaneity between popular Chinese actions in the Cultural Revolution and the global impact of these events around the world. Exhibiting a more militant, radicalized, and colloquial tone, these texts betray the very practice of the revolutionary struggle Mao so sought in the young people crafting these narratives, and reveal the extent to which a perceived global dimension to the Cultural Revolution formed an important part of its appeal and its practice.

As these arguments resonated, striking a chord with Chinese nationalist sensibilities, the Cultural Revolution's signature pursuit of 'enemies' became imbued with this global connection. With Liu Shaoqi said to be "China's Khrushchev," domestic threats to Chinese socialism were deemed to be conspiring with enemies abroad. They were thus guilty of treason – a powerful charge that invited a protective Chinese nationalism to wash over the movement, profoundly informing the violence that would come to define it. Amidst this paranoia, all things foreign came under heavy scrutiny by 1968, and a nativist xenophobia emerged testifying to how internationalism had given way to an unrestrained and unapologetic Chinese nationalism.

This chapter argues that the cumulative deployment of *domestic internationalism* throughout the 1962-66 period had a critical impact on Mao's ability to procure the mass mobilization necessary to launch the Cultural Revolution in May 1966. In tracing internationalist texts of the early movement, I first look at how the Party-published versions built off of the conceptual groundwork laid by the Party in the early-to-mid-1960s, and helped it to forge an idea of the Cultural Revolution as a world historic event. I then analyze the Red Guard versions of these texts, arguing how their militant tone reveals at once their reception of the Party's argument about the movement and how they would seek to practice it. Next, I explore

the discursive blending of foreign and domestic threats through the language of ‘enemies,’ arguing that this formulation paved the way for accusations of treason. It would be this notion of treason, I suggest, that definitively transformed the Cultural Revolution’s ideas of internationalism into a Chinese nationalism vowing to staunchly defend that nation’s pursuit of a socialist modernity against foreign threats. Greatly informing the widespread violence that would continue well into the early 1970s, these developments would spark the unraveling of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese society, and the country’s pursuit of socialism altogether.

Triggering Transnationalism: Internationalist Propaganda Texts of the Early Cultural Revolution, 1966-67

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76) tends to be read as a domestic Chinese phenomenon.¹ To be sure, this view has emerged for good reason. Though Mao Zedong’s decade-long project of mass mobilization and revolutionary rejuvenation captivated large swaths of the international left from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s, its tumult unfolded within the PRC’s borders. And yet, the Cultural Revolution was inextricably tied to the wider global landscape in which it emerged. Indeed, one staple Mao text circulated widely throughout the period was his 1939 essay commemorating Norman Bethune, the left-leaning Canadian doctor who travelled to Yan’an and gave his life to the CCP’s civil war struggle against the Guomindang. His “spirit of internationalism,” people across China would read, was

¹ Recently, scholars have begun to depart from this trend, investigating the global appeal of, and transnational dimensions to, the Cultural Revolution. See, for example, Cook ed., *Mao’s Little Red Book: A Global History*, Christiansen and Scarlett eds., *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, Wolin, *The Wind from the East*, Frazier, *The East is Black*, and especially Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split.” These exceptions notwithstanding, there remains a lack of exploration into how the very idea of the Cultural Revolution’s global appeal impacted events as they unfolded on the ground back *inside* China.

essential for “every Chinese Communist to learn.”² Indeed, internationalism would serve an important function in the Cultural Revolution, helping to define its meaning and scope.

After the Cultural Revolution formally began in May 1966, *domestic internationalism* kept right on depicting events abroad as it had over the previous few years. Events including the 1965 Indonesian coup, U.S. intervention in Vietnam, and the Six-Day War in the Middle East were marshaled to help serve and maintain political mobilization at home in the PRC. But the early Cultural Revolution also gave way to a new focus in domestic Chinese internationalist propaganda: the explicit promotion of China’s transnational appeal and the Cultural Revolution as an event of world historic importance. These texts, published by Party publishing houses, were collections of anecdotes and vignettes demonstrating the appeal, amongst foreign audiences overseas, of Mao, Mao Zedong Thought, the PRC more broadly, and the Cultural Revolution. These stories would often recount the events behind foreigners engaging, becoming enthralled with, and then applying, various tenets of Mao Zedong Thought, growing increasingly infatuated with Mao, China and the Cultural Revolution in the process.

These texts were either written by or drew upon the experiences of a wide cast of characters including: Xinhua News correspondents stationed abroad, Chinese students being educated in other countries, foreign students studying in the PRC, Chinese representatives at PRC exhibitions overseas, low-level Chinese delegations on public diplomacy trips, and even foreigners situated in their home countries sending their thoughts to China by letter. In emphasizing the consistent theme of far-reaching, transnational support for Mao and the Cultural Revolution, these stories captured foreigners as they furiously read Mao’s Little Red Book, sang revolutionary Chinese songs, yearned for a CCP-style socialist revolution in their own country,

² Mao Zedong, “In Memory of Norman Bethune,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 2*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1952).

defended the PRC against its critics, and even made pilgrimages to revolutionary sites in China, including Mao's birthplace (at Shaoshan, Hunan province) and the Yan'an base area of the early CCP. These foreign characters came from all stations of society, and included writers, students, workers, children, and farmers. Accordingly, these tales championed the transnational nature of Mao's appeal between ordinary people across international boundaries, and shared minimal connection to the specifics of the PRC's state-to-state foreign relations and top-level diplomatic engagement.

In some cases, these collections drew on reprinted articles from nationally circulated newspapers like *People's Daily*, *PLA News*, and *Chinese Youth News (Zhongguo Qingnian Bao)*. In addition to these articles, these works often contained first-hand testimonials by foreigners or (more often) the Chinese authors that encountered them abroad. Poems written by foreign admirers of Mao and the Cultural Revolution were also common, as were photo inserts depicting international audiences of various races celebrating China or furiously reading Mao's collected works.

Stylistically, the stories often betrayed an unmistakable emphasis on *China's* Mao Zedong, *China's* Cultural Revolution, and *China's* Red Guards. The power of these influences was global, but their origin was not to be confused – it was China that was leading the world's oppressed peoples into the revolutionary future. Here, the texts seem to reveal their intentions vis-à-vis the domestic Chinese readership for whom they were designed. As one text described its importance in the publisher's forward,

The world's people's passionate extolling of the great leader Chairman Mao and the mighty Mao Zedong Thought will offer great encouragement and will help propel the Chinese people's study of Chairman Mao's works, the great consolidation of Mao

Zedong Thought, and the thorough implementation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.³

Another text, designed for circulation within the People's Liberation Army but consistent in content with the popularly-circulated texts, was "to be used by company cadres to teach classes or organize readings for troops."⁴ The central motive behind these state-sponsored texts was clear: use the alleged transnational appeal of China's revolution to politically mobilize the Chinese population at home.

Of the various themes these texts marshaled to serve this end, the most explicit is the global appeal of the cult of Mao Zedong. These tales portray foreigners as enchanted by Mao, lauding him as "the greatest genius of our times," the likes of which "rarely has history seen."⁵ Painting Mao as a Chinese marvel for the world's people to enjoy, the Chairman is deemed a "gift" to the world and a "beacon over mankind."⁶ Accordingly, Mao's *Collected Works* are said to be cherished by the world's people. In several anecdotal tales, his *Works* are carried into battle by world revolutionaries from National Liberation Front guerillas in southern Vietnam to leftist fighters in Laos, and are deemed a "vital necessity" for the anti-imperialist forces in the Congo.⁷ In one of many patronizing passages implicitly suggesting a teacher-pupil dynamic,

³ Renmin Chubanshe Bianjibu [Editorial Department of the People's Press], *Shijie renmin re'ai Mao Zhuxi re'ai Mao Zedong sixiang tongxunji, diyiji: Mao Zhuxi shi shijie renmin xinzhong de hongtaiyang* [Collection of Reports on the World's Revolutionary People's Passionate Love for Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong Thought, Vol. 1: Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in the Hearts of the World's People], (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe [People's Press], 1967) [hereafter: *Report, Vol. 1*], publisher's note.

⁴ Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun Haijun Beihai Jiandui Zhengzhibu Xuanchuanbu [People's Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department], *Mao Zhuxi shi shijie geming renmin xinzhong de hongtaiyang* [Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in the Hearts of the World's Revolutionary People], (May 1967), [hereafter: *Red Sun #3*], publisher's note.

⁵ Hsinhua Correspondents, "The Brilliance of Mao Tse-tung's Thought Illuminates the Whole World," in *The Brilliance of Mao Tse-tung's Thought Illuminates the Whole World*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1966) [hereafter: *Brilliance*], 2.

⁶ Hsinhua Correspondents, "Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in the Hearts of the World – An Account of the Visits of Friends from Five Continents to Chairman Mao's Birthplace at Shaoshan," in *Ibid.*, 34.

⁷ Hsinhua Correspondents, "The Brilliance," in *Ibid.*, 4, 6, 10. See also: Jinan Junqu Zhengzhibu Xuanchuanbu [Jinan Military Area Political Department Propaganda Department], *Mao Zhuxi shi quanguo he quanshijie renmin xinzhong de hongtaiyang – Shijie renmin re'ai Mao Zhuxi he Mao Zhuxi zhuzuo de gushi* [Chairman Mao is the Red

Mao's *Works* are considered "indispensible textbooks for revolutionaries."⁸ Further insinuating that Mao's appeal flows transnationally between ordinary people, these texts highlight how he is celebrated even in countries hostile to the PRC, including India, Japan, Thailand, and the United States, where laborers and the downtrodden are drawn to his ideological innovations on Marxism-Leninism.⁹

Though Mao Zedong, his "Thought," and his *Collected Works* comprise the most explicit trope in these state-published internationalist texts, the Chairman serves here mainly as a vehicle through which the Party communicates its central argument: that China is at the center of the world revolutionary movement, and the Cultural Revolution thus holds world historical significance. By tapping into Mao's cult of personality – well-established by mid-1966, as Daniel Lesse makes clear – the Party seizes upon its most transnational asset to advance an argument bigger than merely Mao himself, an argument about the global stakes to the future of China's socialist enterprise as embodied by the Cultural Revolution designed to save it.¹⁰ In so doing, these works helped to mobilize Chinese readers by giving them a direct role to play in world revolution. Participating in China's Cultural Revolution would constitute a direct contribution to the worldwide revolutionary cause.

Mao was also an avenue through which these texts could offer a larger point – one about China as a historical model for all postcolonial states seeking dignity, sovereignty and modernity. Though China was never fully colonized by the West the way much of the Third World had been, this had never stopped Mao's PRC from seeking to build a connection with these countries on the grounds of this shared history. It was also a narrative that lent itself well to domestically

Sun in the Hearts of the Chinese People and the Entire World's People – Stories of the World's People's Passionate Love for Chairman Mao and Mao's Collected Works], (December 1966), [hereafter: *Red Sun* #2].

⁸ Hsinhua Correspondents, "The Brilliance," in *Brilliance*, 13.

⁹ See Jinan Military Area Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #2.

¹⁰ See Lesse, *Mao Cult*.

deployed internationalist propaganda since it resonated with a popular Chinese nationalism keen to witness China's return to a position of global centrality. The PRC's validity as a historical model was advanced in a number of different ways.

They began by emphasizing the importance of Communist China's revolutionary history for foreign audiences abroad – and particularly for admirers in the Third World. Owing to Mao's role as central innovator and strategist of China's socialist revolution, foreign characters chronicle their visits to his birthplace at Shaoshan as touching “sacred soil,” the “cradle” and the “university” of revolution.¹¹ Those that travelled to Jinggangshan, the mountainous pre-revolutionary base area where the young CCP found its feet, describe being amidst a “sacred place.”¹² The Party's long, protracted civil war against the Guomindang is also widely celebrated by these foreign characters. Algerian military commanders, fresh off their victory over French colonialism, praise Mao's essay “Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War.”¹³ Ecuadorian farmers eagerly press Chinese reporters to explain how exactly the CCP overcame such odds to win the Chinese Civil War before overthrowing the landlord class.¹⁴

Returning to Mao, one collection explains how his essays and strategies offer a “grounding of theory for the revolutionary wars now in process or those yet to be launched.”¹⁵ Among these ongoing wars, readers are told of Laotian guerillas thriving under the guidance of the “long-tested” Chinese Communist Party with their “rich experience in struggle.”¹⁶ “Friends from Asia, Africa and Latin America,” in Beijing visiting the Museum of the Chinese Revolution there “realize they must walk the path the Chinese revolution,” to ensure that “China's today is

¹¹ Hsinhua Correspondents, “Shaoshan,” in *Brilliance*, 30.

¹² Wuhan Junqu Zhengzhibu [Wuhan Military Area Political Department], *Mao Zhuxi shi shijie renmin xinzhong de hongtaiyang* [Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in the Hearts of the World's People], (August 1966), [hereafter: *Red Sun #1*], 41.

¹³ Hsinhua Correspondents, “Brilliance,” in *Brilliance*, 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

our tomorrow.”¹⁷ China’s revolutionary path, culminating in the CCP’s successful establishment of the PRC in October 1949 and built on the foundation of Mao Zedong Thought, ensures the “oppressed and exploited peoples all across the world” the chance to “be able to stand up, and forever stand up,” just like the Chinese people before them.¹⁸ Though Mao remains the central component of China’s transnational appeal in these texts, they strive to impart to a domestic Chinese readership something larger about China’s innovative revolutionary roadmap, and the world’s desire to emulate the achievements of the Chinese people more broadly.

The PRC’s post-liberation accomplishments are thus also held up as an exemplary postcolonial path in pursuit of modernity. Conveniently sidestepping the recent calamity of the Great Leap Forward and the systemic problems emerging in the People’s Communes, these texts champion the PRC’s effort to rebuild a great civilization thwarted by the twin evils of Western colonialism and U.S. imperialism. One Algerian commentator, keen to see his country begin building its future after securing the country’s liberation in 1962, talks of turning to Mao Zedong Thought especially in the “years of reconstruction since independence.”¹⁹ “You Chinese in the past were also very poor, now there is nothing you can’t do,” one Mauritanian friend argues, “China is a symbol of national revival, China is our model.”²⁰ At the PRC pavilion to an international exhibition in Budapest, one foreign spectator lauds the CCP for the “huge success” it has “obtained” in “industry, agriculture, culture, and the arts,” which has “fulfilled [the Chinese people’s] desires.”²¹ At a similar exhibition in Paris, viewers were reportedly “left with deep and lasting impressions” of the PRC’s “artistic marvels” and “rich wonders, whether in

¹⁷ Wuhan Military Area Political Department, *Red Sun #1*, 25-26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁹ Hsinhua Correspondents, “Brilliance,” in *Brilliance*, 10.

²⁰ Wuhan Military Area Political Department, *Red Sun #1*, 60.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

industrial, agricultural, or science and technology.”²² A Cuban worker and avid reader of Chinese pictorial publications, posts pictures capturing “the realities of life” and the “unceasing development and progression” of China on his walls.²³

Moving beyond the CCP’s revolutionary and military acumen, these anecdotes aimed to convince readers of the transnational persuasion of China’s postcolonial rise and pursuit of modernity. The world yearned for what the Chinese people had right at home, domestic readers were told. Attendant to this, the PRC’s pursuit of national development and modernization was also lauded for its privileging of self-reliance, national dignity, and sovereignty amidst a Cold War world fraught with superpower hegemony and meddling.

If the PRC’s path of postcolonial development was a model for the world, it went hand in hand with a geopolitical philosophy that transcended socialism and embraced principles of sovereignty, respect and self-reliance, these texts argued. Foreigners visiting Yan’an, the CCP’s austere base area after the Long March (1934-35), recount how it allows them to better understand Mao’s notion of “self-reliance” (*zili gengsheng*).²⁴ One admirer from Mauritania extolls the PRC for daring to say “no” to imperialist forces throughout the world, and says China’s practice of self-reliance is the “model” for his people.²⁵ In an extended anecdote originally published in *People’s Daily*, Chinese correspondents discuss a PRC developmental aid plan in Tanzania, in which Chinese advisors help to build a television and radio broadcast station. Locals there were not only thrilled with the aid from a “sincere friend” that will benefit “future

²² Ibid., 89.

²³ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 21.

²⁴ Wuhan Military Area Political Department, *Red Sun* #1, 53.

²⁵ Ibid., 62.

generations,” but were stunned at the idea of foreign experts treating them as equals, “close friends and brothers.”²⁶

Drawing upon a similar theme of China’s respect for issues of dignity and equality, the African-American civil rights leader Robert Williams praises Mao for his support of “the struggle of our Negro brothers the world over.”²⁷ By cherishing such values, the PRC would destroy the old world, erecting a new one in its place. China was a “vista of hope for our youth,” as one foreigner put it, and its ethical navigation of modernity would guide the world’s people in establishing “a new world in which they retain sovereign control over their own affairs.”²⁸ For socialist and non-socialist states alike, these texts made clear, Mao’s China espoused a modern morality elusive to the superpowers and their allies, and its worldwide appeal made it a leader for all those emerging from the dark cloud of colonial oppression.

For foreign audiences drawn to revolution and national liberation, however, early Cultural Revolution internationalist propaganda texts also made clear that Beijing was at the center of their revolutionary aspirations and inspirations. Mao is praised, one Yugoslavian poet writes, by the downtrodden “in those places where they still have black slaves, where slave owners keep their slaves in chains.”²⁹ African youths studying in the Soviet Union offer a poem to Mao, calling him a “close relative” who “ignites the hearts of the Afro-Asian people.”³⁰ Indeed, since Beijing has replaced Moscow as the center of world revolution largely on the

²⁶ Renmin Chubanshe Bianjibu [Editorial Department of the People’s Press], *Shijie renmin re’ai Mao Zhuxi re’ai Mao Zedong sixiang tongxunji, di’erji: Mao Zedong sixiang de guanghui zhaoyaozhe quanshijie* [Report on the World’s Revolutionary People’s Passionate Love for Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong Thought, Vol. 2: The Brilliance of Mao Zedong Thought Shines Over the Entire World], (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe [People’s Press], 1967) [hereafter: *Report*, Vol. 2], 58, 61.

²⁷ Hsinhua Correspondents, “Brilliance,” in *Brilliance*, 18.

²⁸ Ibid.; Wuhan Military Area Political Department, *Red Sun #1*, 2.

²⁹ Jiefangjun Wenyishe [People’s Liberation Army Arts and Literature Press], *Maozhuxi shi shijie geming renmin xinzhong de hongtaiyang* [Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in the Hearts of the World’s Revolution People], (August 1967) [hereafter: *Red Sun #4*], 17.

³⁰ Jinan Military Area Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun #2*, 50.

strength of its superior understanding of the conditions of Third World national liberation, these African students are depicted forging a close bond with their Chinese counterparts there.³¹ Even across the Soviet Union and Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe, locals are said to look to Beijing as the “lighthouse” of world revolution.³² At a level below state-to-state relations, these texts were arguing, people around the world were looking to China as the leader of all those seeking freedom from oppression. History, they were sure to add, was finally turning in the direction of this broad, worldwide revolutionary community.

Mao’s China was not only at the center of a vast fraternity of world revolutionaries, but the time for this group to flourish had finally arrived. No longer, these collections insisted, would this community’s ambitions be thwarted by the designs of Western colonialism, U.S. imperialism, or Soviet revisionism. “The days of imperialism are numbered,” one text reads, as “the oppressed and exploited people will grow with increasing vigor.”³³ This is the “age of Mao Zedong” one essay holds; the Chairman himself a “symbol of our age.”³⁴ As a Palestinian poet describes, morning was finally breaking and the future was bright,

Look! A magnificent radiance shines from Beijing,
Emitting ten thousand golden rays of light.
It is an enormous brightness,
And it turns the sky red across the East.

Mao Zedong! The sun of the East!
It is you who gives hope to the entire world.
It is you who gives direction to our forward progress.
We follow closely as Mao Zedong makes revolution,
Simultaneously and in unison we sweep away the vermin!

Look!
The dawn of victory
Is breaking through the curtain of night.
The moment of victory is about to arrive,

³¹ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 2, 26.

³² Hsinhua Correspondents, “Brilliance,” in *Brilliance*, 24.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁴ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 1; People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 1.

Tomorrow the world will be completely bright!³⁵

In presenting to a Chinese readership this notion of a shared moment and transnational historical destiny amongst the world's revolutionary peoples, these texts aimed to spark a feedback loop of political mobilization: if, by carrying out Mao's socialist revolution in China, the Chinese people had so inspired the world and commenced a new age in human history, it was now even *more* crucial to sustain this enterprise and continue leading the world's people from darkness to light.

As one text described this cycle,

The world's revolutionary peoples, full of lofty revolutionary sentiments, study Chairman Mao's works and this gives us enormous inspiration. We must therefore hold *even higher* the great flag of Mao Zedong Thought, learn and apply in practice *even better* Chairman Mao's works ourselves.³⁶

Paternalist and patronizing in nature, this conception of Chinese internationalism was itself inherently nationalistic. These ideas thus resonated with a popular Chinese desire for the country to return to a place of global centrality – a nationalist sentiment that itself had never faded since the establishment of the PRC, and indeed even predated Chinese socialism. As the early Cultural Revolution progressed into 1967, these Party published texts would begin engaging explicitly with the Cultural Revolution's world historic importance and its attendant global popularity.

China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as an event of world historic significance was the central theme of the state sponsored texts that emerged in 1967. Ongoing events in China were reported as "arousing the world revolutionary people" by initiating a "new epoch" in the international communist movement with this "wonder of human history."³⁷ Foreigner testimonials were positioned to corroborate the idea that the Cultural Revolution was

³⁵ People's Liberation Army Arts and Literature Press, *Red Sun* #4, 28.

³⁶ Wuhan Military Area Political Department, *Red Sun* #1, 2. (emphasis mine)

³⁷ Editorial Department of the People's Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 1; People's Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 41.

unprecedented in the annals of history, and shook the world to its core. Italian observers declare it of “enormous historical significance” and a “great contribution to the revolutionary enterprise.”³⁸ An enthusiast from Jordan sees “deep and lasting significance” in a movement that “encourages” the world while “enriching” Marxism-Leninism.³⁹ These comments offered Chinese readers – Red Guards and other practitioners alike – a sense that the world was watching closely as they carried out the Cultural Revolution in Beijing and other major cities. Indeed, as one Ceylonese supporter claims, the movement has rendered China “the great school” and “all the oppressed peoples and nationalities around the world are watching.”⁴⁰ A letter from Bulgaria describes how “the Bulgarian people watch closely the development of China’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution with extreme interest and attention.”⁴¹

Foreigners watching events unfold in Beijing are reported echoing sentiments about its global significance, and even participating in crafting big-character posters in the capital. Eager to fight “shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese people,” this group even changes the name of their residence dormitory to the “Norman Bethune building.”⁴² There was no mistaking it, these texts argued, the Cultural Revolution held world historic significance, and consequently foreigners around the globe were thrilled with events transpiring across China.

Attendant to this argument was another point these texts aimed to impart to readers: precisely because the movement held historic global significance it was crucial for it to succeed. China’s effort to beat back capitalist restoration and eliminate the revolution’s revisionist saboteurs was of “decisive importance for the future prospects of world revolution,” one foreign

³⁸ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 13; Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 2, 34.

³⁹ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 48.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴¹ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 11.

⁴² Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 10-12; See also Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, Chapter 6.

supporter claims.⁴³ A poet from Zimbabwe sees the movement as essential to “cleansing the entire earth.”⁴⁴ One French friend writes that events in China are “critical” in “deciding the fate of the world,” comparing them with 1917 and 1949 as watershed moments in the history of world communism.⁴⁵ What China does today, a Romanian laboratory technician claims, the entire world will be doing in the future.⁴⁶

Adding fuel to the revolutionary fire, some observers tell Chinese readers of the early returns on their actions in the Cultural Revolution. The Cambodia-China Friendship Association reports that the movement had already dealt a “sharp blow” to the U.S. imperialists and their running dogs, and offers “new encouragement and power” to national liberation movements across the Asian, African, and Latin American world.⁴⁷ Friends in Tanzania praise the Cultural Revolution as “an extremely helpful influence to the people of Africa as they seek to expel colonialism from African soil.”⁴⁸ For Robert Williams, the “oppressed peoples across the world see the victories of the Chinese people and derive enormous encouragement from them.”⁴⁹ In a battle for the future of all mankind, Chinese readers were learning from the world that they were winning. As these texts also reminded them, however, enemies continued to abound, ready to thwart their hard won gains.

Indeed, the 1967 state published works present a pervasive sense that China, its admirers, and the world revolutionary community at large were under attack from enemies of various shapes and forms. At the heart of this enemy collective were the twin evils of U.S. imperialism

⁴³ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 12.

⁴⁴ People’s Liberation Army Arts and Literature Press, *Red Sun* #4, 63.

⁴⁵ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 48.

⁴⁶ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 12.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

and Soviet revisionism, and their running dogs and lackeys throughout the world. As these collections argue, however, if the broad community of world revolutionaries led by China stuck together, they would squash the enemy's nefarious designs. "The Soviet revisionists detest China's Cultural Revolution," one Bolivian friend remarks, "but the world's people in fact admire and seek to imitate China."⁵⁰

Foreigners studying in the Soviet Union and sympathetic to China and the Cultural Revolution were common victims in these narratives. In one instance, an African student in the Soviet Union is nearly forced by his Soviet hosts to participate in an anti-Chinese rally. When he refuses, he is beaten and his visa revoked.⁵¹ In another tale, Soviet authorities try to limit contact between foreign students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America and their Chinese classmates there. As these students collaborate together on a rally against the Vietnam War in Moscow, Soviet police swoop in to beat them. Throughout the ordeal, where they "spilled blood together in the streets of Moscow," the Third World students recite Mao quotations.⁵² Even outside the Soviet Union, the Soviets are said to be scheming against world revolution. A Mauritanian friend recounts a Soviet diplomat offering him a book criticizing China's Cultural Revolution and the Red Guards. Refusing to accept it, he chastises the diplomat for his "inaccurate attempt to smear" Mao's brave Red Guards.⁵³

Similar enemy attempts to sully China and its achievements abound in these collections. One Congolese militia general is "angered" when he hears "imperialists, revisionists, and reactionaries speak poorly of China," and expresses his desire to "protect China!"⁵⁴ A Japanese

⁵⁰ Editorial Department of the People's Press, *Report, Vol. 1*, 48.

⁵¹ Editorial Department of the People's Press, *Report, Vol. 2*, 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 28-30.

⁵³ People's Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun #3*, 53.

⁵⁴ Wuhan Military Area Political Department, *Red Sun #1*, 62.

supporter, upon his return home following a stay in the PRC, remarks on the subsequent resistance he faced from revisionist Marxists there.⁵⁵ In an essay entitled, “The Greatest Revolutionary Movement in Human History,” a Vietnamese friend laments how the Americans and Soviets “brazenly slander and attack China’s Cultural Revolution” around the world.”⁵⁶ An observer from India recounts how “reactionaries” there verbally attack the movement in an attempt to prevent the Indian masses from understanding the “truth of China’s cultural surge.”⁵⁷ In a poem, an East African anti-imperialist soldier celebrates Mao Zedong Thought for helping to defeat imperialism, revisionism, and “all domestic reactionary elements.”⁵⁸

Indeed, the notion of enemies around the world seeking to derail China’s Cultural Revolution – and striking a blow at the entire world revolutionary movement in the process – was one intricately connected with the movement’s stated intention to root out traitors and saboteurs at home. For a domestic Chinese readership of these 1967 state-issued texts, there emerged a sense that both around the world and right there at home, China and its world revolutionary community were under assault. Accordingly, the stakes of the Cultural Revolution were becoming raised; a life and death struggle was beginning to emerge. Holding world historic significance and with countless enemies ready to pounce, the Cultural Revolution needed to succeed at all costs. Thankfully, these works assured, the movement was led by a young and vibrant new revolutionary vanguard.

As a defining feature of the 1967 state texts, China’s Red Guards were lauded incessantly. Foreign testimonials praising these young Cultural Revolution practitioners helped Chinese readers – including Red Guards themselves – to embrace the role they perceived

⁵⁵ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁸ People’s Liberation Army Arts and Literature Press, *Red Sun* #4, 44.

themselves to be playing in world revolution, as well as the monumental stakes associated with their actions. This foreign championing of the Red Guards takes on a variety of forms, the first of which is to present them as the vanguard of the future of world revolution. Calling them “heroic peoples,” audiences from abroad foretell these Chinese youths will “be like stars, forever glimmering bright in the red proletarian universe.”⁵⁹ One New Zealander, suggesting the pioneering nature of their efforts remarks, “the youths of the Chinese revolution have never been this high-spirited and vigorous.”⁶⁰ A Spanish guest to the PRC sees the Red Guards as the “vanguard of the modern revolution,” and “models for the European youth.”⁶¹ Abroad, a 13-year old Japanese boy echoes this thought, taking the Red Guards as his “model.”⁶² A Cuban professor praises the Chinese youth for using Mao’s Thought as a weapon in China’s Cultural Revolution in order to prevent capitalist roaders within the CCP from gaining control.⁶³ From Tanzania, a revolutionary youth group there writes a letter praising the revolutionary behavior of the Red Guards, before discussing their “rise” as an “extremely important event” and directly addressing Chinese readers, saying: “We are paying attention to you.”⁶⁴

This sense of the world watching Red Guard actions as they unfolded in China worked alongside the larger notion that these young people had assumed the mantle of the vanguard of world revolution. If Mao and China had become the leaders of the broad world revolutionary community, Chinese Red Guards were its foremost political-military force. Such ideas provided Red Guards with a mounting sense, indeed a delusion, of their own grandeur. For this generation of Chinese youth – a group removed from the revolutionary glories of their parents’ generation

⁵⁹ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report, Vol. 1*, 14.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶² People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun #3*, 31.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

and the ‘golden years’ of the early PRC – they now had a distinct role to play, not just in China’s Cultural Revolution nor the larger socialist enterprise that it served, but also in the world revolutionary struggle waged far beyond Beijing and far grander than anything their parents had accomplished.

Beyond their portrayal as the vanguard of world revolution, these texts also paint Red Guards as veritable global celebrities. Red Guards are not merely celebrated for their revolutionary rigor, but are also presented as virtually ordained extensions of Mao himself. Foreigners in Beijing are said to give “the highest appraisal” of the “daring” Red Guards.⁶⁵ Upon meeting and chatting with some of them there, foreign guests are view the event as “filled with extraordinary significance.”⁶⁶ In another text, an Australian enthusiast proclaims Red Guards to be doing an “outstanding job.”⁶⁷ A Belgian friend asks that his “fraternal greetings” be passed on to the Red Guards, for whom he is “deeply passionate.”⁶⁸ Members of the Albanian Workers’ Party, upon their return home, speak fondly to their countrymen of their opportunity to meet with Red Guards.⁶⁹ In Poland, an ordinary laborer offers bouquets of flowers to them, affectionately referring to them as “the revolutionary youth who have emerged from the Cultural Revolution.”⁷⁰ In a poem, a Japanese fan speaks directly to the Red Guards, imploring them, “You are doing a good job!”⁷¹ He goes on to discuss how Red Guard “enemies” fear them, before telling them: “we can hear...we can see...we can realize” your accomplishments, your revolutionary passion, and your heroic posture in battle. In these 1967 state published texts, Red Guards are nothing less than global celebrities, the rock stars of

⁶⁵ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 13.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁷ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 2, 35.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁹ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 42.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷¹ People’s Liberation Army Arts and Literature Press, *Red Sun* #4, 61.

China's historic Cultural Revolution. With Red Guards themselves comprising a significant portion of their readership, the transnational propaganda feedback loop these texts facilitated thus helped foster a sense of exceptionalism amongst these Chinese youngsters, without them ever leaving the country.

This Red Guard self-perception of exceptionalism and inflated grandeur would continue to grow as these texts emphasized a foreign audience's desire to emulate their actions. As the 1967 texts argue, enthusiasts abroad were keen to not only do as Red Guards do, – quoting Mao passages, singing revolutionary songs, wearing Mao badges – but to also do it *as* Red Guards were themselves doing it. This alleged emulation thus worked to suggest a sense of parallelism between Red Guard actions within China and their immediate ripple effect across the world. This notion of revolutionary simultaneity across space placed a powerful sense of agency within the grasp of the Chinese youth carrying out Mao's will.

A shared sense of time – and the idea that the worldwide community was surging up at once to greet history together – formed an important part of the power behind these state published texts. In a line that could easily have been uttered by a Chinese Red Guard, one such collection quotes Laotian guerillas vowing to “truly revolutionize ourselves, temper ourselves into steadfast revolutionary fighters.”⁷² Mao Zedong Thought is consistently referred to as “living Marxism-Leninism at its highest in our era.”⁷³ Drawing on the emerging global ubiquity of Mao's collected works, the Chairman's writings themselves serve as a kind of synchronic connection between Red Guards in China, and revolutionary sympathizers around the globe. Since the launching of the Cultural Revolution, one French fan reports, the demand for Mao's

⁷² Hsinhua Correspondents, “Brilliance,” in *Brilliance*, 8.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 13.

works in France far exceeds supply.⁷⁴ Offering a well-intentioned critique, a Zanzibar youth laments the lack of a Swahili translation of Mao texts, saying this need indicates “the African people’s urgent thirst for Mao Zedong Thought.”⁷⁵ Using the Mao cult as a vehicle for a larger argument about the transnational importance of events in China, these texts told Chinese readers that their actions at home were being emulated in real time across the globe.

Accordingly, many of the quintessential elements of the Cultural Revolution – Mao badges, revolutionary songs, big-character posters – were making their way around the world. In anecdotes starring characters from Portuguese Guinea, Venezuela, and Somalia, revolutionaries clamor to receive a Cultural Revolution badge (some depicting Mao, others Tiananmen Square) to share in the movement.⁷⁶ In Brazil, student groups there play and sing along to “The East is Red,” the iconic Cultural Revolution production.⁷⁷ “Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman,” another Chinese song and staple of the era, is also said to be a favorite of foreign audiences “across the five continents and the four oceans,” where “the entire world sings loudly.”⁷⁸ Third World students in the Soviet Union wear badges of Mao’s likeness, adorning their dorm room walls in Mao portraits, lining their bookshelves with his works, and frequently seeking out their Chinese classmates to sing together Cultural Revolution songs.⁷⁹ In one story set on a domestic Chinese flight from Shanghai to Beijing, the singing of Cultural Revolution songs spontaneously breaks out between a Chinese propaganda troupe, Japanese friends visiting the PRC, and a Guinean sports delegation.⁸⁰ As essential elements of practicing the Cultural

⁷⁴ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 40.

⁷⁵ Wuhan Military Area Political Department, *Red Sun* #1, 65.

⁷⁶ Hsinhua Correspondents, “Brilliance,” in *Brilliance*, 13, 25.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁸ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 1.

⁷⁹ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 2, 26-27.

⁸⁰ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 4.

Revolution at home, these texts suggested, wearing Mao badges and singing revolutionary songs were never merely domestic acts; they held worldwide significance and simultaneously inspired those abroad, who watched every move Red Guards and other Chinese practitioners made.

Indeed, foreign enthusiasts were depicted as drawn to any news of events transpiring in China as they happened. The documentary film *Chairman Mao Greets the Great Million-Person Army of the Cultural Revolution*, containing real footage of Mao waving to adoring Red Guards in Tiananmen Square in 1966, is portrayed as a favorite of China watchers abroad. The film “attracted broad spectators across the world,” one text reports, who cheer each time Mao adorns the screen.⁸¹ In Tanzania, locals likewise applaud the Chairman as they watch the film, which was screened widely including a mass viewing in a public square in Dar-es-Salaam.⁸² The crew of an Albanian merchant ship docked in Shanghai also enthusiastically enjoys the film, which is screened for them alongside another documentary, *Chairman Mao Greets the Red Guards and the Teachers and Students of the Revolution*.⁸³ These stories implied to their Chinese and Red Guard readers the simultaneous effects of their actions in the Cultural Revolution, and offered evidence of foreign audiences literally watching Red Guards (via film footage) as they carried out Mao’s movement. If the Cultural Revolution gave Chinese youth a role to play in the revolution, state internationalist propaganda made clear that foreign audiences were actively taking in their performances.

Still images also emphasized this point. In Budapest, a Hungarian man speaks glowingly about bringing his young daughter to a photo exhibition depicting the accomplishments of

⁸¹ Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 5.

⁸² Editorial Department of the People’s Press, *Report*, Vol. 2, 61; People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 34-35.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 2.

China's Cultural Revolution.⁸⁴ In a separate text, a Hungarian worker also reacts favorably after attending the same event.⁸⁵ At a photo exhibition held in Kathmandu, Nepali friends are taken by images of Red Guard activities.⁸⁶ Emerging from the ubiquity of internationally circulated images of the Red Guards' big-character posters, one Soviet graduate student argues that these posters provide "an excellent means by which the masses educate the masses."⁸⁷ French communists likewise praise the big-character posters they see displayed by China's "revolutionary masses."⁸⁸ The world was watching, Chinese readers were being told, and the acts they performed inside the PRC were being captured in the eyes of the world with little delay. There was no time to waste; the moment for revolutionary action was now.

The sounds of the Cultural Revolution were also being transmitted to the world in real time, these texts alleged. Amidst the movement, one story told, foreigners are listening closely to Radio Peking to capture events in the PRC as they unfold.⁸⁹ Thereafter, these foreign fans would write letters expressing their passion for the actions of the Chinese people. One guerilla fighter in South Vietnam says the broadcasts support him on the battlefield.⁹⁰ A listener in Uruguay refers to Radio Peking as his "spiritual nutrition."⁹¹ More specifically targeting the Cultural Revolution, the text goes on, broadcasts of its launching "shake the world." In Japan, Radio Peking reports of Red Guard operations excite one listener's heart, and he feels these Chinese youth provide China with "an entirely new look" rendering the Cultural Revolution an

⁸⁴ Editorial Department of the People's Press, *Report*, Vol. 1, 5.

⁸⁵ People's Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 48.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸⁷ Jinan Military Area Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #2, 62.

⁸⁸ People's Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun* #3, 43.

⁸⁹ Editorial Department of the People's Press, *Report*, Vol. 2, 32.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

“incredibly moving event!”⁹² One New Zealand follower is pleased to hear any broadcasts about the Red Guards, the likes of whom the USSR never had and whose role there are “no words to describe.”⁹³ A Greek Marxist-Leninist says he regularly listens to Radio Peking and reads Chinese periodicals, and is filled with “excitement” to see photos of Mao next to the “young path breakers of the revolution.”⁹⁴

Through both the visual and the audial circulation of Red Guard actions around the world, and the subsequent Party propaganda texts relaying information *about* this circulation, young practitioners of the Cultural Revolution increasingly felt the world closely tracking their behavior. Indeed, there was good reason to believe that one’s actions in the Cultural Revolution – however ostensibly domestic or local in their orientation – would be communicated to the world to serve a global effect. There existed a simultaneity, these Red Guards came to believe, between their actions at home and the effect of these actions abroad; a parallelism that enhanced the importance of their conduct and raised the stakes of their mission.

One state published text, designed originally for the military but consistent in content with the more popularly circulated tracts, defined its purpose explicitly. The intention of this collection, the forward stated, is to help readers understand the appeal of Mao Zedong Thought abroad.⁹⁵ “Please study” these stories of Mao and China’s transnational popularity, and then “propagandize them broadly.” As the early Cultural Revolution progressed, this is precisely what ensued. Red Guards and other young practitioners in China drew inspiration from these

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 35.

⁹⁴ People’s Liberation Army Navy North China Sea Fleet Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun #3*, 43.

⁹⁵ Jinan Military Area Political Department Propaganda Department, *Red Sun #2*, forward.

state compiled internationalist texts, gaining an inflated sense of grandeur of their stewardship of the world revolutionary movement, and carrying this perception into their practice of a Cultural Revolution now imbued with the heightened stakes of world historic importance and a globe closely fixated on them. While these perceptions would play an important role in the movement's steady drift toward violence, they first inspired Red Guards to themselves take the reigns of publishing about the world's enthusiasm for the Cultural Revolution and the global ramifications of its efforts.

Violent Verbatim: Red Guard Internationalist Texts, 1967-68

Accompanying the launching of the Cultural Revolution midway through 1966, state published internationalist propaganda texts had successfully framed the movement as one of world historic significance. Young Chinese people, owing at least partly to this tactful positioning of the event, were mobilized in great numbers and the movement began to be carried out. In so doing, more internationally minded Red Guard units took it upon themselves to take up the torch of reporting on, and propagandizing about, the world's warm response to the Cultural Revolution and themselves as its vanguard.

These popular publications first emerged midway through 1967 and continued over the ensuing year before Mao began sending most Red Guards 'down' to the countryside in late 1968. At the helm of these publications were Red Guard units largely comprised of Chinese students recently returning home from abroad to participate in the Cultural Revolution. They wrote of encountering adoring classmates and other foreigners in their time abroad, and often positioned themselves as enjoying celebrity status amidst their foreign locales. They were self-ascribed authorities on the wider world.

Stylistically, these texts capture a tone that is markedly more militant and assertive. Their prose is noticeably harsher, more colloquial, and less polished than that of their state sponsored precursors. Indeed, even their cover art seems to testify to this point; the Red Guard publication covers depicting a variety of the world's diverse peoples brandishing Mao's works and weapons as they veer toward the red sun of Mao's China, the state text covers comparatively austere and plain.

In their very existence as Red Guard productions, these texts evidence a reception and popular resonance of the argument put forth by the Party-led texts. Ideas of the Cultural Revolution's world historic significance and the warm foreign reception of the movement resonated with a latent Chinese nationalism keen to effect China's return to a place of strength, dignity, and centrality on the global stage. The collections also betray, however, something else: a radicalized, even militant edge consistent with what we now understand to be a defining feature of the early Cultural Revolution's violence and zeal.

These texts thus demonstrate the very practice of revolutionary struggle that Mao sought from young people in the Cultural Revolution, and bespeak the extent to which considerations of the wider world formed part of the ideational bedrock motivating these young Chinese people. As the Cultural Revolution would increasingly come to privilege discourses of 'enemies' and 'treason,' this international dimension would form a critical part of instigating, encouraging and deepening the violence that convulsed China during these years, and led to the Red Guards being summarily dismissed to the countryside by late 1968.

Before being 'sent down,' however, Red Guards stood up, taking internationalist propaganda into their own hands. In the year between July 1967 and July 1968, the Beijing Red Representative Committee of Returning Students Service Station published a handful of

collections of foreign enthusiasm for Mao, the Cultural Revolution, and the Red Guards. Based out of the Friendship Hotel in Beijing – a bastion of internationalism housing not only these returning Chinese students but also a host of foreigners keen to play a role in the Cultural Revolution themselves – this group was explicit with their visions for these collections.⁹⁶ As a forward note to a 1967 edition reads, enthusiastic praise for the Cultural Revolution from abroad offers a “great spur and strong encouragement” for those in China thoroughly carrying out the movement.⁹⁷

The stories these returning students compiled thus indicated both their own mobilization to participate in the Cultural Revolution, as well as their desire to pass this inspiration along to attract other young Chinese participants to their cause and to further encourage those already engaged in the movement. Their time spent abroad offered them a kind of credential – they had seen the world and its love for China firsthand, “with our own eyes...with our own ears...with our own bodies,” they proudly declared.⁹⁸ They were a self-declared authority on all things internationalist and their stories were implicitly intended to corroborate and enhance the arguments put forth by the state texts.

The militant tone of the returning student texts is striking. One volume commences with several anecdotes pertaining to foreign study in Bulgaria. African students there are portrayed as mistreated by their Bulgarian hosts, largely on the grounds of their race.⁹⁹ Throughout the description of events, local authorities there are referred to as “revisionist Bulgarian bastards

⁹⁶ See Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 153.

⁹⁷ Shoudu Hongdaihui Guiguo Liuxuesheng Hongweibing Qinwuzhan [Beijing Red Representative Committee of Returning Student Red Guards Service Station], *Mao Zhuxi shi shijie geming renmin xinzhong de hongtaiyang* [*Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in the Hearts of the World's Revolutionary People*], (Beijing, July 1967) [hereafter: *Red Sun #5*], 1-2.

⁹⁸ Shoudu Hongdaihui Guiguo Liuxuesheng Zunyi Bingtuan [Beijing Red Representative Committee on Returning Students Zunyi Corps], *Xianhong de taiyang zhaobian quanqiu, diyiji: Mao Zhuxi a, shijie geming renmin re'ai nin!* [*A Fresh Red Sun Shines Across the Entire World, Vol. 1: Oh, Chairman Mao, The World's Revolutionary People Passionately Love You!*], (Beijing, July 1967) [hereafter: *Oh, Chairman Mao*], 56.

⁹⁹ See Beijing Red Representative Committee of Returning Student Red Guards Service Station, *Red Sun #5*, 9.

(*Baoxiu hundan*)” and their treatment of African students sympathetic to Mao’s China as “revisionist Bulgarian white terror (*Baoxiu baise kongbu*).”¹⁰⁰ As the Chinese students there are set to depart for the PRC to take part in the Cultural Revolution, their African classmates come to them with three requests: to greet Mao on their behalf, to vigorously carry out the Cultural Revolution, and to send them a photo of the Chinese students adorned with the signature Red Guard armband once they formally join the ranks.

The Bulgarian anecdotes convey a sense of persecution and being under attack, but are also written to reflect a naturally occurring fraternal connection between China and the Third World. Though the Bulgarian government pursues various “anti-China” measures toward the students, including preventing them from celebrating the PRC’s National Day and trying to limit their contact with other international students, “Chinese students never feel isolated” anywhere in the world because everywhere they have “comrades-in-arms.”¹⁰¹ Further still, imbued with inspiration from China’s Cultural Revolution, these comrades were fighting back. Though the world revolutionary forces under China’s leadership are under attack, there is reason to be hopeful the Cultural Revolution will help guide them to assume their rightful place in history.

This optimistic outlook notwithstanding, the tales continue to present Chinese students and their allied classmates under attack as the texts progress. Foreign study in Cuba is difficult amidst “the lunatic” Fidel Castro’s verbal assaults on Mao, and a Peruvian admirer of China there vows to make her way to the PRC upon her graduation.¹⁰² A student from Sierra Leone is so racially discriminated against at the hands of his Bulgarian hosts that he quits his studies and

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 8-12.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰² See Ibid., 12, 35.

returns home.¹⁰³ In another tale, the American pilot on a U.S.-operated flight offers a Nepali passenger free travel in exchange for removing his Mao badge, which he refuses.¹⁰⁴ In Mali, a Soviet art teacher tells his young student that if he continues to draw images of Mao's face, he will receive a grade of zero in the class.¹⁰⁵ The boy carries on despite receiving vicious chastisement from the teacher. In Czechoslovakia, the authorities there act like "rabid dogs," verbally assaulting China to their people.¹⁰⁶ At a Chinese New Year art exhibition in Morocco, anti-China protestors harass the attendees who defend the PRC's honor.¹⁰⁷ In one collection, the authors point out that despite revisionist efforts to slander the Red Guards, including East Germans labeling them "terrifying" and "extremely frightening thugs," the fact remains that "rumors are rumors" and the broad masses of the world know better than to believe such lies.¹⁰⁸ Though enemies were plentiful, both around the world and at home in China, the world's revolutionary community was even more populous and was bound to thrive if everyone contributed together to the same end.

Though foreign sympathizers of China and the Cultural Revolution were persecuted for their beliefs, these Red Guard texts often portrayed the PRC and Chinese embassies abroad as refuges for attacked friends. In an unnamed "revisionist" country in Eastern Europe, a distraught seventeen-year old girl flees to the Chinese embassy where she implores the staff to help her "understand China" and the Cultural Revolution.¹⁰⁹ Upon recounting to her the "glorious results" of the Red Guards' various battles, she is enthralled. In another unspecified Eastern

¹⁰³ Guiguo Liuxuesheng Hongweibing [Returning Student Red Guards], *Xianhong de taiyang zhaobian quanqiu – Quanshijie renmin wuxian re'ai Mao Zhuxi* [A Fresh Red Sun Shines Across the Entire World – The Entire World's People Limitlessly and Passionately Love Chairman Mao], (Beijing, July 1968) [hereafter: *Fresh Red Sun*], 33.

¹⁰⁴ Beijing Red Representative Committee of Returning Student Red Guards Service Station, *Red Sun* #5, 29.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

European country, a Japanese student writes his thesis on applying Mao Zedong Thought to this host country's economy.¹¹⁰ When he criticizes that country's economic strategy, he is attacked. He later makes his way to China to take in the Cultural Revolution, where he is reunited with his former Chinese classmates who find him fully clothed in Red Guard apparel.

Chinese embassies abroad are also sanctuaries where persecuted foreigners can receive unadulterated information about China's exciting undertakings. Jean, a Congolese man living in Paris, is frantic when he learns the city is sold out of Mao's little red book. After scouring the city, he decides to go to the Chinese embassy where a staff member offers him his own personal copy. Henceforth, Jean declares, he will be known as "Jean-Mao."¹¹¹ Jean-Mao's playful name change aside, the theme of converting to a deep devotion of Mao was a common trope in these assertive Red Guard texts.

As the Cultural Revolution steadily deepened Mao's cult of personality into something akin to deity worship, the Red Guard texts legitimized this devotion through a series of anecdotes in which foreigners abandoned their religions and turned to Mao. In Iraq, a Muslim man explains to Chinese students there that he has changed his name to Abdullah Mao Zedong. As he teaches them, his original name meant 'servant of Allah,' but he is now a 'servant of Mao Zedong.'¹¹² A Nepali Buddhist converts to Maoism as his faith of choice after reading Mao's works and determining that only Mao can "save our Nepal," only Mao can "save me."¹¹³ A young Christian girl in East Germany declares that she believes "there is only one god, and that is the use of Mao Zedong Thought as a weapon with which to arm the people."¹¹⁴ "All other

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 12-15.

¹¹¹ Beijing Red Representative Committee on Returning Students Zunyi Corps, *Oh, Chairman Mao*, 6-7.

¹¹² Beijing Red Representative Committee of Returning Student Red Guards Service Station, *Red Sun* #5, 28.

¹¹³ Ibid., 29.

¹¹⁴ Beijing Red Representative Committee on Returning Students Zunyi Corps, *Oh, Chairman Mao*, iv.

gods,” she asserts, “are reactionary.” At the PRC embassy in Pakistan, an old Muslim man arrives telling the Chinese staff,

I have been to Iran, to Arabia, and have become a follower of Islam. I once believed I already worshipped the true god. Now I am old. I want to go to China, for I know, the true god is not anywhere else, he is in China, in Beijing. I want to represent my city’s people and go worship Chairman Mao.¹¹⁵

Just as they were doing in China at the time, the Red Guard authors of these texts positioned their cause as a legitimate form of worship, implying a sense of grandeur and dignity to their otherwise dogmatic cause.

This focus on religious conversion went hand-in-hand with the larger theme of foreign emulation of Red Guard activities. Continuing the trend initiated by the 1967 state texts, the Red Guard publications also aimed to enhance their own grandeur as global celebrities, and offered no confusion about who was the forefront of the world revolutionary movement. At the 1966 PRC National Day festivities in North Vietnam, one tale recounts, Chinese students there hold a screening of the documentary film *Chairman Mao Greets the Great Million-Person Army of the Cultural Revolution*. Each time the film depicts Chinese Red Guards crying tears of joy in Mao’s presence, the Vietnamese students emulate them, shedding their own warm tears as the film mesmerizes them.¹¹⁶ A Columbian student in Czechoslovakia also cries while watching the film, telling her Chinese classmates she has already viewed it six times.¹¹⁷ “I am willing to do battle alongside the Red Guards,” she proclaims, “I want to go with you to Beijing, go with you to see Chairman Mao at Tiananmen!” In addition to mimicking Red Guard actions, foreigners were suggested to be sharing a simultaneous moment with the Red Guards they adored.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 8-9.

¹¹⁶ Beijing Red Representative Committee of Returning Student Red Guards Service Station, *Red Sun* #5, 22-23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 48.

Like the state published texts before them, the Red Guard tracts privileged ideas of parallelism and simultaneity between their own actions inside the PRC, and supporters reenacting them around the world. In one tale, a North Vietnamese soldier leaving Hanoi for the frontline requests a Mao badge from a Chinese friend there, which he vows to wear as he “kills the endlessly evil American bandits.”¹¹⁸ A National Liberation Front fighter in South Vietnam also receives a badge from a Chinese comrade, before requesting too a photo of Mao decked in military garb greeting Red Guards at Tiananmen Square.¹¹⁹ In an unnamed African country, Chinese development experts give a local a Mao badge. Upon receiving it, he cries and says “everyone but Mao looks down upon black people.”¹²⁰ One Vietnamese friend is so concerned for the safety of his Tiananmen Square and Mao badges amidst a rainstorm that he covers them with his hand saying,

Tiananmen is the place all the world’s revolutionary people yearn for, it is the site where the great teacher Chairman Mao reviews the revolutionary troops. I absolutely must not allow the rain to harm it; I must resolutely protect Tiananmen, protect Chairman Mao!¹²¹

In a passage capturing the enhanced militancy and urgency of the Red Guard texts, the authors describe Eastern European friends “enveloped by white terror...endangering their lives searching for a badge of Chairman Mao’s likeness,” and warriors of Asia-Africa-Latin America “fighting their bloody battles, bleed[ing] and risk[ing] their lives protecting their treasured book of Mao quotations.”¹²² On the Zanzibar coast, locals there enjoy singing “The East is Red” and “Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman” in “not very proficient” Mandarin.¹²³ Nevertheless, their

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 21-22.

¹²⁰ Beijing Red Representative Committee on Returning Students Zunyi Corps, *Oh, Chairman Mao*, 25.

¹²¹ Returning Student Red Guards, *Fresh Red Sun*, 2-3.

¹²² Ibid., 1.

¹²³ Beijing Red Representative Committee of Returning Student Red Guards Service Station, *Red Sun #5*, 31-32.

Chinese friends there “hear the voices” and feel “permeated with passion” at the thought of the Cultural Revolution unfolding back home.

In Italy, Chinese comrades attend an event at a foreign embassy and quickly become the center of attention thanks to their Mao badges.¹²⁴ They are asked to sing “The East is Red,” which is thoroughly well received. Chinese students in the country also screen the *Mao Greets* documentary at their Italian friends’ request. PRC citizens abroad, owing to the transnational appeal of the Cultural Revolution and the global celebrity of the valiant young Red Guards, are the attraction of the world. The Cultural Revolution was ‘shaking the world,’ and it therefore must be carried out to the fullest extent. No enemy, foreign or domestic, could be allowed to stand in its way; the fate of the world’s revolutionary people, and the future promised them by history and justice, depended upon it.

Unlike the state-sponsored texts, and betraying an agenda to blend the global and domestic theatres of the Cultural Revolution, these Red Guard collections began to make more specific references to the events unfolding inside the PRC. One tale depicts a young Indonesian girl who, inspired by the early Cultural Revolution campaign to “Destroy the Four Olds,” begins wearing a Red Guard armband and changes her name to mean “facing East.”¹²⁵ She emulates various Red Guard activities and sings revolutionary songs as she reflects on the 1965 slaughter of Indonesian communists by the Suharto regime now in control. Suddenly, an African man there sees her and yells out in solidarity, “Strike Down China’s Khrushchev! Strike Down the Suharto-Nasution Reactionary Ruling Clique! Long Live Chairman Mao! Live Forever Chairman Mao!”¹²⁶ The campaign to “Destroy the Four Olds” was also sometimes referenced

¹²⁴ Ibid., 40-41.

¹²⁵ Returning Student Red Guards, *Fresh Red Sun*, 7-8. The campaign to ‘Destroy the Four Olds’ was initiated in August 1966, and targeted ‘old culture, old customs, old habits, and old ideas.’

¹²⁶ Ibid., 8.

implicitly. In a story about the positive influence of the Cultural Revolution, China's Red Guard movement is said to have encouraged the youth of Albania to establish a "revolutionary headquarters to oppose the superstition, prejudice and backward customs of religion."¹²⁷ The Red Guards' battle against Chinese tradition, the text suggested, was applicable both to the PRC and global venues the world over.

Enemies of the Cultural Revolution were not bound by their nationality, and included domestic reactionaries, "China's Khrushchev" Liu Shaoqi, Indonesia's Suharto, and other foreigners alike. In an anecdote set in a school in Poland, local students there, owing to the encouragement they derive from the Cultural Revolution, one night decorate their classroom with a portrait of Mao and banners with slogans including: "Strike Down [Soviet leader Leonid] Brezhnev!," "Long Live Mao Zedong!," and "Long Live the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution!"¹²⁸ Moving beyond the generalized mobilizing messages of the state texts, the Red Guard collections of 1967-68 had a more nuanced agenda to accommodate and sustain a movement already off and running. For them, it was not about sparking a Cultural Revolution, but rather about sustaining its vigor, broadening its ranks, and deepening its meaning.

Attendant to these intentions, the returning student Red Guards were not content to simply publish these collections. As they recount in the postscript to their July 1968 collection, these units also travelled around China offering in-person reports and leading discussion groups in which they recounted their experiences abroad. The popular reactions to these events their texts depict portray a Chinese population keen to draw upon China's transnational appeal to do *even more* to carry out the Cultural Revolution at home, thereby effecting world historic change. As one industrial worker in Shanghai reasons,

¹²⁷ Ibid., 100.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 24.

The world's people passionately love Chairman Mao because they have learned from the experiences of their battles the greatness of Chairman Mao and the enormous might wielded by Mao Zedong Thought. We thus absolutely must carry out to the end the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, we must forever protect China from ever changing color, we must strictly manage the revolution, vigorously stimulate the growth of production, and both ideologically and materially support the struggle of the world's people!¹²⁹

An old, poor peasant attending one returning student discussion group sees a confluence between his own struggle and that of the global downtrodden. Together, he asserts, they form a “family” “under heaven” (*tianxia*), for whom Mao is the “great emancipator of the entire world’s people” who will thwart a “China’s Khrushchev” eager to “pull China back toward the old road of capitalism” and force them to “once again eat bitterness and endure hardships.”¹³⁰ PLA soldiers defending the Chinese-Soviet border in northern Xinjiang, on the strength of their study of the Cultural Revolution’s wider global context, vow to “study and apply more painstakingly the works of Chairman Mao, hold tight in our hands our guns, and pledge to be the staunch backup force of all the world’s revolutionary peoples.”¹³¹

At a deaf-mute school in Beijing, the returning student Red Guards offer a presentation translated via sign language. The young children are captivated, appearing to “hear the world’s people’s heartfelt words of praise” and looking as if they want to “alongside the world’s people, shout out together” their passion for Chairman Mao.¹³² In Shanxi province, a five- or six-year-old girl, upon hearing these tales of China’s transnational importance, sprints to her home returning with a shiny Mao badge and a note her mother helped her to craft. “Please take this treasured badge and give it to the children of Albania,” her note reads, “after hearing stories of their limitless passionate love for Chairman Mao, I was extremely moved and want to study their

¹²⁹ Ibid, 110.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 111.

example.”¹³³ Though the authenticity of these popular Chinese reactions to the returning student Red Guard presentations is difficult to confirm – and they are unquestionably exaggerated – their inclusion in the text is telling.

Indeed, these anecdotes seem to offer important insight into the intentions behind these early Cultural Revolution internationalist propaganda texts – both the state-sponsored works and the Red Guard publications – more broadly: to use the alleged global appeal of Mao, China, and the Cultural Revolution to mobilize for, and even shape the practice of, the Cultural Revolution itself. Designed to strike a chord with an enduring and popular Chinese nationalism, these tales used a global backdrop as the setting to tell a story that was ostensibly about the world, but unmistakably about China – a strong, dignified, and centrally-positioned China, destined to save the world’s people from their impending peril.

As the returning student Red Guard units took command of these compilations midway through 1967, the texts took on a more militant tone bespeaking the very practice of the Cultural Revolution for which these youths had been mobilized. They also indicate an evolving motive: whereas the state-led texts were aiming to get mass mobilization off the ground in 1966, the Red Guard texts were seeking to sustain, deepen, and intensify the commitment of Cultural Revolution practitioners throughout the country. As the movement grew increasingly paranoid through 1967 and 1968, the raised stakes and ‘life-or-death’ perceptions of the Cultural Revolution the internationalist dimension had helped to establish would collide with the search for ‘enemies’ and the defense against ‘treason,’ with haunting consequences.

Enemies, Treason, Xenophobia and the Intensification of Violence, 1967-68

¹³³ Ibid.

Though Mao had to be pleased with internationalism's effectiveness in marshaling mass mobilization for his Cultural Revolution, ideas of the wider world would have a chilling effect on how the movement was to play out. The cumulative effect of internationalism's penetration into everyday Chinese life throughout the 1962-66 period and the ideas offered by the internationalist texts of the early Cultural Revolution, had convincingly suggested the global impact of events unfolding on the ground in China. So convincing, in fact, that they would inform how the movement's young practitioners would carry out their effort to cleanse China of all elements working against its socialist revolution. Just as the Cultural Revolution was carried out domestically but held worldwide implications, so too its enemies existed outside and inside the PRC, perhaps even in close collusion with one another. The Soviet revisionist and the Chinese counterrevolutionary might look different, speak different languages, and subscribe to different cultures, but their goal was understood to be the same: thwart China's destiny.

Indeed, from the Cultural Revolution's earliest days, those targeted were harangued by accusations and labels which frequently implicated the international realm. Liu Shaoqi, the period's highest profile target, was among the first painted with this brush. From very early on in the movement, Liu was labeled "China's Khrushchev." The moniker would stick, becoming the preferred way of referring to Liu for the remainder of the Cultural Revolution. The "Weidong" Red Guard group at Tianjin's Nankai University, for example, celebrated Mao's August 1966 implied critique of Liu by writing,

That was the key salvo, the shot that led to the complete and thorough burying of the bourgeois headquarters headed by Liu Shaoqi, China's Khrushchev! It was the shot that shook up the whole world! It was a salvo that opened up a whole new chapter in human history! It was in the noise of this earthshaking shot that the conspiratorial clique of Liu Shaoqi, that big renegade and traitor who has hidden himself inside the Party for as long as thirty years, was exposed!¹³⁴

¹³⁴ This essay appears in full in Michael Schoenhals ed., *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966-1969: Not a Dinner Party*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 95.

By aligning Liu with Khrushchev, the PRC's single greatest foreign enemy of the day, they could discursively lump him into an imagined worldwide conspiracy to bring China down from the inside. Liu's crimes were not simply ideological; they were national. He was not merely a revisionist; he was traitor – an enemy agent who had wormed his way into the Party.

Accordingly, the campaign against Liu Shaoqi became about rehashing not just his ideological and political crimes, but also his history of betraying the nation. Prominent Party propagandist Qi Benyu did precisely this in his widely read April 1967 essay, "Patriotism or National Betrayal?"¹³⁵ Qi systematically picked apart Liu's career, questioning his dedication to resisting the Japanese during China's War of Resistance, accusing him of opposing the PRC's socialist transformation, and "echo[ing] the ghosts and monsters at home and abroad in viciously attacking" programs including the Great Leap Forward.¹³⁶ Liu, Qi concluded, must be a "sham revolutionary, a counter-revolutionary...a Khrushchov lying right beside us!"¹³⁷ Qi's assault was printed in full on the front pages of *People's Daily* on April 1, and was discussed in the paper's editorial columns for weeks thereafter.¹³⁸

The use of the wider world to critique Liu did not stop with him. His wife, Wang Guangmei, too would be judged using a similar tactic.¹³⁹ Kidnapped by Red Guards from Beijing's Qinghua University in April 1967, Wang was beaten and interrogated. Throughout her intensive questioning, Wang was forced to wear the traditional Chinese *qipao* dress she had worn while accompanying Liu on a 1963 trip to Indonesia. The Red Guard interrogators, keen to make a highly gendered argument that Wang had flirted with Indonesian President Sukarno,

¹³⁵ The full text is available in English in *Peking Review*, 15 (1967): 5-15.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* (sic)

¹³⁸ Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 262n3.

¹³⁹ Herself a longtime CCP member, Wang had taken a more active role in politics on Liu's suggestion in the early 1960s, most prominently travelling with Liu in 1963 to assess rural corruption (see Baum, *Prelude to Revolution*).

compelled her too to wear silk stockings, high heels, and an ersatz pearl necklace fashioned out of Ping-Pong balls.¹⁴⁰ “By wearing this dress to flirt with Sukarno,” one questioner screamed at her, “you have put the Chinese people to shame and insulted the Chinese people as a whole.”¹⁴¹ The interrogators then went on to try and use Sukarno’s politics – by now out of favor with Chinese radicals in the wake of the 1965 coup – against Wang, criticizing her for allegedly flirting with “such a bad fellow as Sukarno.”¹⁴² Even Wang’s effort to distance herself slightly from her husband was not enough to save her once the world had been brought to bear on her damning case.

Much like the Tenth Plenum had paved the way for *domestic internationalism*’s resonance after 1962 by conceptually merging the international sphere with China’s revolution at home, so too the global and the local collided in the early Cultural Revolution’s pursuit of enemies. As the movement itself was framed as essential for both China *and* the wider world, the line between foreign and domestic enemies became blurred beyond recognition. When struggle sessions against the revolution’s perceived enemies themselves began explicitly marshaling notions of secret agents, foreign conspiracies, and collusion, the dual identity of enemies as both foreign and Chinese began to be consolidated conceptually. The campaign against “China’s Khrushchev” Liu Shaoqi – though exceptional given his lofty political stature – would serve as a model for how many local-level struggles would take place throughout the Cultural Revolution’s most violent years.

Ideas of foreign spying and treason against China and the Chinese people became rampant, often fundamental to mounting an effective case against an enemy. In some instances,

¹⁴⁰ See Westad, *Restless Empire*, 356.

¹⁴¹ Qinghua University “Jinggangshan Regiment” Red Guards, “Interrogation Record,” in Schoenhals ed., *China’s Cultural Revolution*, 106.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 109.

local officials were persecuted on allegations of seeking to build their own “independent kingdom” (*duli wangguo*) apart from China.¹⁴³ Amidst the paranoia of the early Cultural Revolution, internationalism had worked to mobilize popular participation but also to effectively raise the stakes of the movement.¹⁴⁴ The world was watching and depending on China’s success with the Cultural Revolution, it was said, but this also meant foreign enemies would seek to disrupt it just as did domestic ‘capitalist roaders.’ As the stakes of success rose, a life or death struggle was emerging – a development that would help further pave the path to the Cultural Revolution’s descent into widespread and sustained violence.

At the heart of why the Cultural Revolution’s perceived global dimension worked to promote and facilitate violence was the idea of treason. These accusations of national betrayal and enemy collusion were the hinge that connected perceptions of the movement’s worldwide significance with a violence fueled by Chinese nationalism. Once the Cultural Revolution became a fight not simply to save socialism but also to save the Chinese nation from a unified foreign and domestic conspiracy, it was a matter of time before violence became the preferred method of tending to one’s opposition – class enemy, college professor, or rival Red Guard faction alike. The Cultural Revolution had transcended merely political ideology. It had become a battle for national salvation.

Accusations of treason found their way into a vast number of political struggles throughout the Cultural Revolution. Again, charges of Liu Shaoqi’s treachery against the Chinese people served as the model for struggle sessions across the PRC. In March 1967, the

¹⁴³ Amongst many others, this accusation was made against Ulanfu, the top Mongolian official in the CCP, a member of the State Council, and Party Secretary of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. His victimization during the Cultural Revolution also drew upon his non-Han Chinese ethnicity, as he was accused of being an “ethnic splittist” (see Guo, Song, and Zhou, *A to Z*, 292-293).

¹⁴⁴ Zachary Scarlett makes this point as well. See especially Scarlett, “China After the Sino-Soviet Split,” Chapter 4.

Central Committee established a special case investigation group on Liu, led by Zhou Enlai, Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng and Xie Fuzhi. In October 1968, at the Twelfth Plenum of the CCP Eighth Central Committee, they presented their findings in a report entitled “An Investigative Report on the Crimes of the Traitor, Spy, and Renegade Liu Shaoqi.” Drawing on “forced confessions, fabricated evidence, and deliberate contrivances of accusatory material,” the report served as the justification for Liu’s formal expulsion from the CCP.¹⁴⁵ Throughout it, the group claimed to possess evidence determining Liu had been “a traitor, a spy, and renegade hiding in the Party, a running dog of evil imperialism, contemporary revisionism, and Guomintang reactionaries.”¹⁴⁶ Privileging the “revolutionary masses” for playing a role in “expos[ing] the true counterrevolutionary face” of Liu Shaoqi, they encouraged Cultural Revolution practitioners to “continue to liquidate the seditious crimes of Liu Shaoqi and his cohorts.” Though Liu had been caught, his coconspirators were still at large seeking to bring down China from the inside, undoubtedly with support from outside the PRC.

But even before the 1968 verdict on Liu, ideas of treason abounded throughout the PRC. Among those leading the charge at the top was Mao ally and Central Cultural Revolution Small Group member Kang Sheng. Kang was fanatical about treasonous Chinese plotting inspired by enemies abroad. In February 1967, he organized a massive rally at Beijing’s Workers’ Stadium to denounce longtime CCP political and military leader Bo Yibo. Red Guards were encouraged to condemn Bo as a traitor, accusing him of colluding with the Guomintang ever since his time spent in one of their prisons decades earlier.¹⁴⁷ The following year, in February 1968, in a speech to members of mass organizations, case examination groups, and the military, Kang

¹⁴⁵ Guo, Song, and Zhou, *A to Z*, 164.

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Yan and Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 161.

¹⁴⁷ Wu Linqun and Peng Fei, “Bo Yibo Has an Attitude Problem,” in Schoenhals ed., *China’s Cultural Revolution*, 123.

alleged that he recently became aware of the North Koreans “organizing treasonous activities among our people through its embassy.”¹⁴⁸ Their allies, the Soviet revisionists, also keep “secret agents” in China, and their friends the Mongolians too are “promoting treasonous activities among our people.”

Kang’s paranoia was far from an outlier, and such ideas were disseminated widely throughout these years. Indeed, one 1969 children’s mathematics workbook used in Beijing, asked students to practice reading large numbers aloud using the following example,

The mighty leader Chairman Mao has taught us: ‘without socialist agriculture, the consolidation of socialism would not be complete.’ But the renegade, traitor, and scab Liu Shaoqi, in an effort to restore capitalism, discontinued 200,000 agricultural cooperatives in 1955. This crime deserves ten thousand deaths!¹⁴⁹

Young and old, throughout the Cultural Revolution, foreign enemies and domestic traitors were said to be plotting China’s demise. In helping to secure mass mobilization to initiate the Cultural Revolution, internationalism had opened the door through which nationalism could run amok. By way of treason, Chinese nationalism would do just that.

Precisely because Chinese internationalism in the 1960s drew upon and manipulated a pervasive and popular Chinese nationalism, these discourses of the wider world always contained an implicit danger – they risked effectively inciting an unrestrained and volatile frenzy of nationalist fervor. When the Cultural Revolution gave individual practitioners free range to target perceived enemies themselves amidst the raised stakes of a world historic undertaking, this is precisely what happened. The hinge was treason. Owing to the Cultural Revolution’s global significance, foreign and domestic enemies alike sought to thwart it. For those domestic enemies

¹⁴⁸ Kang Sheng, “On Case Examination Work,” in *Ibid.*, 118, 120.

¹⁴⁹ *Suanshu [Arithmetic]*, (Beijing: Beijingshi xiaoxue shiyan keben [Beijing Municipal Elementary School Workbooks], 1969), vol. 5, 10-11.

– within reach of the movement’s practitioners inside the PRC – there was only one response, violent punishment in defense of the nation.

There is perhaps no greater evidence for the extent to which Chinese nationalism came flooding into the Cultural Revolution than the wave of nativism, xenophobia, and anti-foreignism that swept through the PRC in its initial years. Indeed it seems counterintuitive that a movement at least partly motivated by ideas of its own world historic importance and foreign appeal would turn so violently xenophobic. At the crux of making sense of this, therefore, must be how ideas of Chinese internationalism were *always* thinly veiled forces of Sinocentric Chinese nationalism, interested in the world principally for how the world was interested in China.

Once pervasive ideas of treason suggested the presence of nefarious foreigners outside (and even some inside) China wanting to sabotage the Chinese revolution, a violent nationalism moved to protect the country and demand foreign recognition of the global significance of the Cultural Revolution. Abroad, Chinese students and diplomats quickly wore out their welcome, insisting their hosts profess their support for the Cultural Revolution, and criticizing any actions deemed to be insufficiently revolutionary. At home, this harassment went even further.

As Odd Arne Westad describes, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, “all that was foreign was viewed with suspicion.”¹⁵⁰ Just as state-published and Red Guard internationalist texts had argued, the world wanted what China had, and thus all things foreign were either polluting to Chinese revolutionary purity, or simply redundant. Most corrupting were western works of culture and art, and they were confiscated and destroyed en masse.¹⁵¹ PRC citizens having studied abroad or with relatives overseas were scrutinized heavily, and many faced

¹⁵⁰ Westad, *Restless Empire*, 355.

¹⁵¹ Kuang-sheng Liao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization in China, 1860-1980*, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984), 182.

accusations of espionage.¹⁵² Foreigners living in the PRC, several for many years by the late-1960s, were not spared these suspicions.

Indeed, stories abound of foreigners who were harassed or even attacked during the Cultural Revolution. While protest rallies outside the Soviet Embassy might have been expected, foreigners sympathetic to the CCP regime were surprised by their treatment. Some were beaten on accusations of harboring foreign-language books they were supposed to have turned over to authorities.¹⁵³ The Swedish ambassador to the PRC, Lennart Petri, recounted how diplomats from France, Indonesia, and the Netherlands all faced hostility from angry Chinese mobs who confronted them violently, blocked their path, or shouted at them with loudspeakers.¹⁵⁴

Even those once deemed exceedingly loyal to the Party were now viewed as suspicious and untrustworthy. Sidney Rittenberg, the first American to join the CCP and a friend of the top leadership since Yan'an, fell victim as well. Though initially permitted to participate in the Cultural Revolution, by early 1968 he was deemed a "counter-revolutionary double-dealer," his Jewish ancestry was held against him, and he was sentenced to ten years in prison.¹⁵⁵ Rewi Alley, the longtime New Zealander member of the CCP and resident of the PRC, was denied access to hospital treatment for skin cancer and forced under house arrest until 1972.¹⁵⁶ Even Gladys Yang, the British translator who had produced the English version of *War Drums on the*

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Westad, *Restless Empire*, 355.

¹⁵⁴ Lennart Petri, "Chinese Molestation of Diplomats," in Schoenhals ed., *China's Cultural Revolution*, 169-173.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 160-166. See too Westad, *Restless Empire*, 356, and for Rittenberg's own account, Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, *The Man Who Stayed Behind*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), Chapter 21.

¹⁵⁶ Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 167.

Equator for the Party's Foreign Languages Press in 1966, came under attack, was accused of being a British spy, and was arrested in May 1968.¹⁵⁷

The Cultural Revolution's nativist xenophobia was likely best exemplified, however, in the events surrounding the August 1967 burning of the British chargé d'affaires office buildings in Beijing. After a labor dispute in British Hong Kong saw locals clash with police that May, nearly a million Chinese people aligned with their ethnic (though not ideological) Hong Kong brethren and protested outside the chargé office in the PRC capital. Protestors hung signs on the chargé building outer walls, including one written in English reading: "Blood debts must be repaid in blood."¹⁵⁸ When PRC journalists were arrested in Hong Kong that August, Red Guards from several universities united with factory workers in Beijing to stage a rally in front of the chargé office. Titled a "Mass Meeting of the Capital Proletarian Revolutionary Rebels Denouncing British Imperialist Crimes against China," the August 22 event disobeyed Zhou Enlai's explicit forbiddance of violence against diplomatic structures, and descended into beatings, destruction, looting, and the ultimate burning of cars and the chargé building itself.¹⁵⁹

By 1968 the Cultural Revolution, and the country it aimed to save, had unraveled. Though, in many ways, China had become closed off from the world – recalling nearly all of its diplomats and alienating most of its foreign friends – it never stopped thinking about the world beyond China's borders. In contrast, Cultural Revolution leaders and ordinary practitioners themselves were nothing short of obsessed about that wider world – however hazy or misguided their ideas about it might be. As the movement shifted from having world historic importance

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 163.

¹⁵⁸ Lennart Petri, "Chinese Molestation of Diplomats," in Schoenhals, ed., *China's Cultural Revolution*, 171.

¹⁵⁹ Guo, Song, and Zhou, *The A to Z*, 24.

and global ramifications into implicating foreign enemy collusion with domestic traitors, ideas of Chinese internationalism opened the door for a volatile and defensive Chinese nationalism to come flooding in. Within the context of saving the Chinese nation from spies, saboteurs, secret agents – suspicions which drew strength from China’s longstanding sense of victimization by foreign aggressors – factional struggles and even petty grievances became imbued with a passion and hatred often only satiated by unrelenting and violent struggle. Closed off though China might have been, ideas of the world had profoundly shaped its descent into chaos.

Conclusion

On the eve of the formal launching of the Cultural Revolution in May 1966, Mao and his Party cohorts stood poised to reap the political fruit borne from years of strategically deploying internationalist propaganda to boost their own domestic legitimacy. Since the days of comprehensive crisis in 1962, ideas of a world turning toward China to lead the postcolonial age had cumulatively shaped a popular perception that now imbued the Cultural Revolution with a fuller, global sense of significance. For China, and for the world looking to make itself in China’s image, it was critical to participate in the movement and reinvigorate the revolution.

The Party would nurture these ideas even after the movement commenced, sponsoring a series of internationalist texts attesting to the worldwide embrace of Chinese modernity, of Mao as its chief steward, and of the Cultural Revolution as a world historic undertaking. The case for being a part of China’s mass movement was building, harder to resist for Chinese audiences across the PRC. As the Red Guard movement grew throughout the Cultural Revolution’s first year, young revolutionary zealots recently returned from abroad took the reigns of these texts. Their time away a credential in their newfound roles as authorities on the world’s love for China,

their texts were markedly militant and aggressive, bespeaking the very playing out of revolutionary struggle Mao sought in them; the wider world a driving agent in how they interpreted and even practiced the Cultural Revolution.

But these Red Guards were not writing these texts in a vacuum, and they were not alone in their perverted ideas of Chinese internationalism. Other Red Guards and non-Red Guard practitioners too found themselves driven by perceptions of the movement's wider global significance and what that meant for China's place in the world. This notion would gain palpable traction as the period's defining 'rooting out' of domestic enemies took on an international dimension. Global implications brought with it foreign enemies, and these thwarters of China abroad were in close cahoots with the PRC's domestic foes – the link had been made, enemies at home were traitors to the Chinese nation. 'China's Khrushchev' was one of many, and these colluders were everywhere.

By way of treason – a concept that itself, in its very nature, bridges the international and the domestic – internationalism had opened the door for nationalism to wash over the Cultural Revolution. When it did, the very enthusiasm and passion internationalism had helped to inspire blended with a vigorous and uncompromising defense of the Chinese nation. Foreign enemies existed, practitioners in China had been told, and all things foreign must thus be scrutinized to ensure they accorded with the purity of the Chinese revolution. Nativism and xenophobia thrived amidst such paranoia, with the razed British chargé d'affaires building the most visible symbol of a campaign that saw even the most revolutionary of foreigners in China harassed, beaten, and alienated.

But of the Cultural Revolution's many millions of victims – most of them, fifty years later, still nameless and unrecognized – only a tiny handful were foreign. Instead, they were women and men, young and old, workers, teachers, students, farmers. They were Chinese. But the story of how they met their cruel fate during China's cataclysmic 1960s is not simply a Chinese one. It implicates, in many different ways and forms, the wider world – *ideas* of the wider world, more precisely. Popular conceptions of the world outside China had a profound impact on the nature and trajectory of events inside China throughout these years. They helped people to make sense of their role, their task, and the global possibilities within their own localized, individual grasp. In so doing, they inspired a rededication to the Chinese revolution, mobilizing and shaping the popular practice of the Cultural Revolution designed to save it. Not long after, they would unwittingly work to undo that very movement, creating a space into which nationalism could come rushing in, and thereby paving the beginning of the end of the Chinese socialist road.

Conclusion

The mass movement would only subside when the Red Guards and other youth were quite literally sent away. The “Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside” (or rustication) movement (*shangshan xiaxiang yundong*), as it would be called, would cast these youth far off, well into the outer reaches of the People’s Republic. There, on remote farms from Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang in China’s north to Yunnan in the southwest, they would toil, losing the better part of a decade of their adolescence and later known collectively as a “lost generation.”¹ Though they had answered Mao Zedong’s call to action to the letter, their unbridled revolutionary zeal had set off a windstorm of chaos and violence, fueled partly by imagined perceptions of the Cultural Revolution’s wider global dimensions. In the two years between May 1966 and July 1968, when Mao formally demobilized the Red Guards and began sending them ‘down,’ Chinese society had almost completely unraveled.

If the mass mobilization phase of the Cultural Revolution would end with the Red Guards’ banishment, the violence would not. Indeed, the 1968-71 period continued to be marked by “ferocious persecution campaigns” in which “by far the greatest numbers of victims were claimed.”² Though, in some instances, Mao’s effort to quell the violence by sending in units of the PLA achieved this objective, the genie could not so easily be forced back in the bottle, and armed conflict persisted in numerous sites across the PRC. Although Mao and his coterie sought to get control of the situation throughout 1968, it would be years still before the frenzy of violence had exhausted itself.

¹ Helena K. Rene, *China’s Sent-Down Generation: Public Administration and the Legacies of Mao’s Rustication Program*, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 9, xi.

² Joseph W. Escherick, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder, “The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History: An Introduction,” in Escherick, Pickowicz, and Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 17.

Domestic internationalism had opened the door for Chinese nationalism to play a central role in how the Cultural Revolution would unfold, facilitating its violent practice by offering an international dimension to perceived political crimes against the Chinese revolution. By 1968, the violence it had spawned had taken on a life of its own. The Chinese state could try – as Mao had midway through 1968 – to reclaim the weapons and ammunition sustaining these factional battles. But confiscating guns and bullets would not dispel the hate-filled paranoia which viewed personal and political grievances through the nationalist lens of treason and enemy collusion.

Though the battle for Chinese socialism and worldwide revolution would continue to play out in PRC streets after 1968, Mao himself would increasingly see the writing on the wall. China's socialist dream was slipping away. The credibility of the enterprise would crumble after September 1971, when Lin Biao – long Mao's most fawning ally and designated successor – would unsuccessfully flee to the Soviet Union, his plane crashing in Mongolia killing all on board. Before long, U.S. President Richard Nixon was touching down in Beijing, ready to kick off a process of Sino-American rapprochement that not much earlier would have seemed unthinkable to Chinese observers.

Though the continuing practice of *domestic internationalism* would help massage these developments with Chinese audiences – shrewdly framing them in the context of Lin Biao's underlying revisionism or Nixon's kowtowing to Beijing – the damage had been done. Not even carefully manicured domestic propaganda could rescue Chinese hearts and minds from the "crisis of faith" that defined their relationship to socialism in the waning years before Mao's death in 1976.³ Its slow retreat well in process, it was then that the dream of a Chinese socialist modernity was definitively laid to rest.

³ Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 277.

The Enduring Legacy of *Domestic Internationalism*

If the prospect of Chinese socialism had perished by the start of the post-Mao era, *domestic internationalism* had not. Having preexisted the 1949 establishment of the PRC itself, led China into the Cultural Revolution in 1966, and survived the great blows to the revolution in 1976, *domestic internationalism* was tried, tested, and resilient. Indeed, precisely because the strategy draws from the well of an enduring Chinese nationalism, it lives on where socialism has retreated. As is well documented, in post-socialist China the contemporary Chinese Communist Party has made a transparent turn toward nationalism and economic growth as its new pillars of legitimacy.⁴ At the very heart of this conspicuous embrace of Chinese nationalism over political ideology exists an abiding strategy of *domestic internationalism*.

Indeed, it was not long after Mao's death and his own remarkable rise back from exile, that new leader Deng Xiaoping drew upon the domestic deployment of internationalism to enhance his political leverage. After experimenting with political liberalization and the relaxing of individual liberties to accompany his neoliberal economic reforms, by early 1979 Deng was growing concerned with the Democracy Wall movement taking hold in Beijing. What started as a mild airing of grievances and political suggestions had intensified into accusations against the Party leadership and calls for significant political reform.⁵ Though Deng had initially tolerated the activist Wei Jingsheng's call for democracy – the “fifth modernization” to accompany the four Deng's reforms had privileged – he now saw in Wei a political threat that must be neutralized.⁶

⁴ See Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), and Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

⁵ See Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 250-257.

⁶ The “four modernizations” Deng championed were in agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology. Though Zhou Enlai had originally tabled this policy as early as 1963, it was only in 1978 under Deng that they were pursued in earnest.

But in early 1979, Deng was also facing another problem. Having embarked on an ill-advised effort to ‘teach Vietnam a lesson’ after its fall 1978 invasion of Cambodia, Chinese forces were mired in a losing battle with their Vietnamese adversaries. Deng had miscalculated, and had lost face amongst some of his peers in the Party.⁷ Sensing an opportunity to both enhance his own political standing while alleviating the Democracy Wall issue, Deng instrumentalized events abroad to serve his ends at home.

In late March, Deng cracked down on the democracy movement, citing among his reasons people raising “wall posters requesting the president of the United States to ‘show concern’ for human rights in China.”⁸ “Can we permit,” Deng asked, “such an open call for intervention in China’s internal affairs?” He then doubled down on this strategy, arresting Wei Jingsheng and having him subsequently sentenced to fifteen years in prison on “counterrevolutionary incitement” and passing official secrets about China’s war with Vietnam to a foreign journalist.⁹ Though Wei had, in February 1979, crafted a wall poster critical of the war, his alleged transmission of state secrets was almost certainly a trumped-up charge, reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution’s ubiquitous accusations of treason. Despite his many differences from Mao, Deng too saw the inherent value in bringing the wider world to bear on domestic politics, and *domestic internationalism* proved a valuable tool for him.

Post-Deng Chinese leaders would find similar value in the strategy in moments of political need. At no time was this need greater than following the 1989 events at Tiananmen Square. As audiences around the world witnessed the violent military crackdown of the student movement in real time televised broadcasts, the event rendered China an overnight pariah.

⁷ Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 80.

⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 82.

While the world community was horrified, at home the Party was reeling. The CCP would waste little time turning to Chinese nationalism as its source of legitimacy, drawing on historical memory to reinvigorate popular enthusiasm for China's rise and its return to greatness.

Few things capture this effort better than the Patriotic Education Campaign. Beginning in 1991, the campaign aimed to intensify and expand nationalist readings of China's modern history in its education system. Designed by Deng's successor, Jiang Zemin, history education in the PRC was to be reoriented to better emphasize elements including: how "Chinese people were subjected to bullying and humiliation under foreign powers" after the Opium War; how many martyrs lost their lives "defend[ing] the Chinese nation" from "foreign aggression"; how the PRC has "experienced several anti-aggression wars" demonstrating how "the Chinese people cannot be bullied"; and how "Chinese citizens have...always been opposed to foreign invasions" and "wish to uphold justice" never having "feared brutal exogenous forces."¹⁰ The Party's implicit message was clear: the wider world's criticism of the Tiananmen Square incident was consistent with its long-standing effort to subdue and bully China. The Chinese people were being picked on. They were embattled; they were victims.

The Party's Patriotic Education program has since become "institutionalized in China – embedded in political institutions."¹¹ Indeed, alongside informing the rewriting of history curriculum, it has also given way to the widespread construction of "education bases," commemorating the sites of heroes, myths, civil war battles, and, most prominently, external conflicts.¹² There can be little doubt that in the over two decades since its inception, the Patriotic Education Campaign has contributed to rising anti-Japanese sentiment in the PRC amidst tense Sino-Japanese relations – another avenue for the CCP's frequent deployment of *domestic*

¹⁰ Quoted in Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 98.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹² See *Ibid.*, 105-106.

internationalism. Indeed, the narrative of China's Anti-Japanese War (1937-45) was itself heavily revised during the education campaign, veering away from the ongoing Chinese Civil War and emphasizing direct engagement with Japan, most vividly by highlighting Japanese wartime atrocities in China.

As the PRC and Japan now find themselves inching closer to military confrontation in the East China Sea – with the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands at the center of their contestation – the CCP instrumentalizes this anti-Japanese Chinese nationalism to enhance its own legitimacy. Though, as James Reilly makes clear, at times popular Chinese anti-Japanese protest can become so hysterical and frenzied that the Party must reign it in lest it risk derailing the PRC's diplomacy and economic interests, Beijing staggers these moves with a calculated stoking of the fires of popular nationalism.¹³ Though no country draws the ire of Chinese nationalist sentiment more than Japan, the United States too continues to serve as fodder for the Party's strategic use of *domestic internationalism* well after the Cold War has ended.

As Sino-American relations are now becoming deeply entangled with the PRC's assertive territorial claims in the East and South China Seas, they have been relatively stable in recent years. This is particularly noteworthy given the rocky road they charted throughout the 1990s, and the U.S.'s frequent appearance in domestic propaganda during those years. Among the more virulent of these episodes occurred in the wake of the accidental NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia on May 8, 1999. Though the death of 3 Chinese staff members (with 23 more injured) and the building's decimation were rightfully lamented by CCP leaders, Beijing wasted little time accusing Washington of misconduct and decried their “barbaric attack” and “gross violation of Chinese sovereignty” on Chinese television

¹³ See James Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

broadcasts.¹⁴ Prominent figures including Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, and current and future leaders Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao all interpreted the bombing as a U.S. plot to bully and humiliate China in an effort to thwart its rise. A May 19 front-page editorial in *People's Daily* captured their sentiments, lamenting the “enemy forces in the West” who “could no longer tolerate” China’s achievements in recent years.¹⁵

Before long, Chinese audiences grabbed hold of the Party’s conspiracy theory. Large-scale anti-American protests broke out across major Chinese cities. In those cities harboring a U.S. Embassy or Consulate – among them, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu – the demonstrations were particularly volatile, with rock throwing and even attempted fires. As Zheng Wang describes, the Belgrade bombing protests “touched off the largest anti-American demonstrations in China since the height of the Cultural Revolution.”¹⁶

Like *domestic internationalism*’s deployment in China’s 1960s, though ideas of conspiracy, victimization and bullying resonated with popular Chinese nationalism, the protests they inspired were not spontaneous or organic outgrowths of their will. Indeed, the very day of the bombing, Party leaders across the country received a directive from Beijing calling upon them to,

Conduct demonstrations, in an organized manner, in the vicinity of diplomatic institutions of the United States in such cities as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenyang, and at the same time have public security departments increase police presence in areas around American diplomatic institutions in China to prevent extremist actions.¹⁷

¹⁴ “NATO hits Chinese embassy,” *BBC News*, May 8, 1999.

¹⁵ Quoted in Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 174.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 174. Zheng Wang derives this quote from the text *Zhu Rongji in 1999*, the special circumstances of which he describes in *Ibid.*, 170-171. An English translation of *Zhu Rongji in 1999* is available at Hairen Zong, “Zhu Rongji in 1999 (1),” *Chinese Law & Government*, 35 (1) (2002): 1-73, and Hairen Zong, “Zhu Rongji in 1999 (2),” *Chinese Law & Government*, 35 (2) (2002): 1-91.

The Party was not seeking blood. But it did want to reap the political boost to its legitimacy that came along with self-identifying as the protector of the Chinese people against a hostile enemy seeking to limit China's advance toward strength, centrality and modernity. A lot had changed since the 1960s, but the tested political strategy of *domestic internationalism* had not.

But the CCP did not have a monopoly on bringing the wider world to bear on domestic politics, and it is worth examining how other political groups have used (and continue to use) internationalism to serve domestic ends. Looking at the inverse of Sino-American interaction bears witness this point well. As the PRC has vaulted to become the world's second largest economy alongside its mounting capacity to project its power abroad, China is frequently vilified by U.S. political entities seeking to boost their domestic legitimacy. While such critiques are now ever-present, they are particularly shrill during America's regular election seasons.

Such was the case during the 2010 Midterm Elections, when the conservative lobby group "Citizens Against Government Waste" ran televised ads envisioning a Chinese-dominated future. The minute-long clip, entitled "Chinese Professor," is set in Beijing circa 2030, where a Chinese economics professor is giving a course lecture on the decline of the American economy. Speaking in Chinese, his words translated in English subtitles, the transparently sinister academic describes how the U.S.'s 2008 financial crisis recovery programs – highlighted by the federal bailout of Wall Street – was its ultimate undoing, plunging the country into debt and decline. He then jokes about how "we owned most of their debt," before snickering and delighting in how "now they work for us."¹⁸ As the scene fades amidst laughing Chinese students, a narrator's voice emerges to warn (in English): "You *can* change the future, you *have* to."¹⁹ By pandering to American nationalist sensibilities, appealing to notions of U.S. exceptionalism, and drawing

¹⁸ Citizens Against Government Waste, "Chinese Professor," YouTube video, 01:02, Posted [October 2010], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTSQozWP-rM>.

¹⁹ Ibid. (emphasis in narration)

on persistent ideas of a totalitarian China, the video sought to advance a domestic-oriented argument about the dangers of ‘big government’ and public sector spending. A government bailout and socialized medicine today, its logic went, Chinese-led slavery tomorrow.

This argument, however “hilariously wrong” it might be, strikes a chord with at least some Americans who view China as a zero-sum rival, and see Beijing’s role in America’s perceived decline.²⁰ This new version of the ‘China threat’ that haunted Cold War America in the 1950s and 1960s remains viable today, and has become an important part of Donald Trump’s populist campaign platform in 2016. Trump’s lament over Chinese currency manipulation and “stealing” of American jobs so resonates with voters, Jeffrey Rothfeder finds, that during the 2016 Republican and Democratic primaries other candidates including Marco Rubio and Hilary Clinton have begun blasting China on these fronts as well.²¹ Protecting American employment and economic opportunities is the argument, with the specter of China merely a prop in this play.

China, of course, is not the only foreign tool in this American political drama, and it is worth looking briefly at what *domestic internationalism* looks like when China is removed from the equation entirely. With the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election providing endless fodder on this front, the Barack Obama administration’s recent nuclear deal with Iran offers another prime example of the strategy in action. Trump, seeking to gain political leverage from emphasizing his self-ascribed acumen in procuring lucrative “business deals,” frequently cites the Iran nuclear deal as “so incompetently negotiated” he has never seen anything like it.²² Obfuscating the Iranian nuclear issue by drawing attention to an abstract idea of “deals,” Trump seeks to draw on lingering suspicions of the Iranian regime, its hostility toward a U.S.-backed Israel, and pockets

²⁰ James Fallows, “The Phenomenal ‘Chinese Professor’ Ad,” *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2010.

²¹ Jeffrey Rothfeder, “Why Donald Trump is Wrong About Manufacturing Jobs and China,” *The New Yorker*, March 16, 2016.

²² Quoted in Robin Wright, “Trump’s Bluster on Iran,” *The New Yorker*, September 11, 2015.

of American Islamophobia to carve out his own political legitimacy as a shrewd negotiator. At the heart of his argument is less a substantive concern for national security or stability in the Middle East, and more the suggestion of his own competency to procure for America ‘good deals,’ whether abroad or at home, amidst a historically gridlocked and underproductive Congress. He is, this argument goes, a ‘Washington outsider’ and that alone renders him the most competent of all candidates in “the art of the deal.”²³

When viewed from the opposite direction, the 2015 U.S.-Iran nuclear deal presents yet another fascinating case of *domestic internationalism* in action. Indeed, throughout the drawn out process of negotiations undertaken by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s regime, the country’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei continued the long-standing tradition of actively vilifying the United States in domestic-oriented speeches. In the wake of the October 18, 2015 adoption of the deal’s provisions, however, American audiences were perplexed when just over two weeks later the country celebrated the 36th anniversary of the start of the Iran hostage crisis in 1979. The occasion was marked with the burning of U.S. flags, a speech by Khamenei haranguing “the Great Satan,” and students chanting ‘Death to America!’ Some Americans were so taken aback they began to wonder if Washington had been duped by Tehran. Khamenei would even feel compelled to clarify to U.S. observers (through Iranian state television) that the ubiquitous chanting of ‘Death to America’ in Iran is aimed at U.S. “policies” and “arrogance” rather than at the nation itself.²⁴

What the Rouhani-Khamenei dynamic represents, then, is a careful negotiation of pragmatic diplomacy with the U.S. through Rouhani, while Khamenei caters to Iranian nationalism to confirm that Tehran got the best of the deal at the expense of Washington. While

²³ See Donald J. Trump, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, (New York: Warner Books, 1987).

²⁴ Quoted in Don Melvin, “Iranian leader: ‘Death to America’ refers to policies, not the nation,” *CNN*, November 5, 2015.

there is little reason to doubt Khamenei's genuine disdain for American "arrogance," it is deployed here strategically to help confirm and maintain the legitimacy of the Supreme Council he and Rouhani represent, as Iran seeks to navigate its difficult regional and global relations in what continues to be a U.S.-dominated international system.

If *domestic internationalism* depends upon a pervasive and popular nationalism to make a resonating argument about the wider world, therefore, China is far from the only place where such a strategy can find success. Few countries are spared strong (sometimes competing) forces of nationalism, at times helping ruling regimes to consolidate their legitimacy, at other times risking the toppling of political groups seen to have failed the nation. In China, however, nationalism continues to exist as especially volatile, given that nation's deep-seated sense of victimization and its abiding vision of its rightful global destiny.

For those reasons alone, there is every reason to believe that the CCP will continue to instrumentalize the world beyond the PRC to help try and legitimize its own domestic political mandate within it. The proposition here is one of high risk-high reward, as relying upon a tempestuous Chinese nationalism might help hold the Party in power, or it might augur its undoing if CCP leaders are viewed as hindering China's destiny in the world. As the PRC's 1960s well demonstrate, the strategic deployment of internationalism helped make possible the Cultural Revolution that Mao and his Party allies felt would save the Chinese revolution. A short while later, it contributed to that same movement's undoing and ushered in the vanishing of the very socialist revolution Mao sought to rescue.

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